

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

----- X

JUNE 15, 2020  
Start: 1:08 P.M.  
Recess: 4:09 P.M.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING

B E F O R E: ANTONIO REYNOSO, CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS: FERNANDO CABRERA  
JUSTIN L, BRANNAN  
MARGARET S. CHIN  
ANDREW COHEN  
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES  
CHAIM M. DEUTSCH  
KEITH POWERS  
BRAD LANDER

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

NICHOLE BEAN: Council to Committee on  
Sanitation and Solid Waste  
Management of New York City

GAIL BREWER: Manhattan Borough President

ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Director at National  
Resources New York City  
Environmental Defense Counsel

CARLOS CASTEEL CROAK: Representative of New  
York League of  
Conservation Voters

JUSTIN WOOD: Director of Organizing and  
Research at New York Lawyers  
for Public Interest/member of  
Save Our Compost Coalition

KATHRYN GARCIA: Commissioner for the New York  
City Department of Sanitation

BRIDGET ANDERSON: Deputy Commissioner for  
Recycling and Sustainability

GREGORY ANDERSON: Assistant Commissioner for  
Policy and External Affairs

DR. TOK MICHELLE OLUWASEYI OYEWOLE: Behalf of  
New York City Environmental  
Justice Alliance (NESA)

YOCANE HALLAR (SP?): Founder of Green Scene

JUSTIN GREEN: Executive Director for Big  
Reuse

CHRISTINE DATZ-ROMERO: Executive Director of  
Lower Eastside Ecology  
Center

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

DAVID HURD: Director Zero Waste Program  
at GrowNYC

CECI PINEDA: Executive Director at BK ROT

KATHY NAZARRE (SP?): Council for Community  
Women/concerned citizen

MATTHEW CIVELLO: Chair of Manhattan Solid  
Waste Advisory Board and  
Manhattan SWAB

MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: Director of Common  
Ground Compost, LLC

EMILY BACHMAN: Representative of the New  
York City Community  
Composting Coalition

CLAIRE FONTAINE: Resident Village East area in  
Village East Towers

OLIVER WRIGHT: Representing Brooklyn Solid  
Waste Advisory Board

WYLIE GOODMAN: Chair of Clean Solid Waste  
Advisory Board Organizing  
Committee

ELSA HIGBY: Project Manager for New York  
City Compost Project

ANNA DELUCO: Translator

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

BEVERLY CROSBY: Representing Sure We Can

PIERRE SIMMONS: Advocate

HELENA WHITAKER: Resident of Gowanus

MARISA DEDOMINICIS: ED and Cofounder Earth  
Matters

JEFF TWINE: President Local Westside  
Recycling

ADAM BRUGG (SP?): Runs Wear Book  
Collections

MICHAEL LEMPARIELLO (SP?): Two Trees Management  
Park Director

DOMINGO MORALES: Runs Reho Compost Site

JODI COLOGNE: From Bronx

ANDREA LISKE (SP?): Earth Matters Worker

JANE SELDON: Representing 350 NYC

ANDRE COBURN: Queen restaurant owner

JESSICA TOVAN: Bronx resident

RUTH ASSA: ICU Nurse and Master  
Composter in Queens

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

PETER CARALINI (SP?): Activist from 350 NYC

NANCY WILBER: Representative for  
People's Climate  
Movement

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

6

2 CHAIRPERSON ANTONIO REYNOSO: Chair  
3 Cabrera?

4 FERNANDO CABRERA: I'm here, can you hear  
5 me?

6 CHAIRPERSON ANTONIO REYNOSO: Yep, I can  
7 hear you.

8 FERNANDO CABRERA: Okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON ANTONIO REYNOSO: Okay.

10 FERNANDO CABRERA: I'm going to turn my  
11 (CROSS-TALK).

12 CHAIRPERSON ANTONIO REYNOSO: Mic check.  
13 Mic check.

14 FERNANDO CABRERA: You're good.

15 CHAIRPERSON ANTONIO REYNOSO: Okay  
16 Sargeant you are good to go ahead and start the  
17 recording and Owen you can give the opening.

18 OWEN: Good afternoon and welcome to  
19 today's remote, New York City Council Hearing of the  
20 Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.  
21 At this time, would all panelist please turn on their  
22 video, please place electronic devices on vibrate or  
23 silent. If you wish to submit testimony you may do s  
24 at [testimony@council.NYC.gov](mailto:testimony@council.NYC.gov). That is

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

7

2 [testimony@council.NYC.gov](mailto:testimony@council.NYC.gov). Thank you for your  
3 cooperation we are ready to begin.

4 CHAIRPERSON ANTONIO REYNOSO: Good m.. uhm  
5 good afternoon, okay, good after and I just ask  
6 everyone to bear with me. I scratched my cornea and  
7 it has been a very difficult couple of days and I'm  
8 struggling with it. I'm grateful that we might be  
9 able to get uhm Council Member Cabrera as a co-chair.  
10 Uhm, extremely grateful. Thank you so much, Cabrera  
11 for always showing up and being helpful and I  
12 apologize to everyone, I'm going to be on as much as  
13 possible but might be disconnected because of just  
14 like needing to like put uhm, put something on my eye  
15 but good afternoon. I am Council Member Antonio  
16 Reynoso and I am the Chair of the Committee on  
17 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. Welcome to  
18 this hearing on Introductions 1942 and 1943 sponsored  
19 by Council Member Powers and myself to create minimum  
20 number of organic waste drops off-site and community  
21 recycling centers throughout each district in New  
22 York City. Thank you to Council Member Powers for  
23 working together with me on this important package of  
24 legislation and for allowing me to be a part of the  
25 legislation. I just want to note that Council Member

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

8

2 Powers thought about the concept and allowed me to be  
3 a partner with him on this uhm issue and I am  
4 extremely grateful to him for that. The outbreak of  
5 COVID-19 pandemic in our City has been both tragic  
6 and financially devastating. The residential  
7 collection of organic waste had temporarily halted on  
8 May 4, 2020 with no plans to resume service until at  
9 least June 30, 2021. Food scrap drop-off sites were  
10 also temporarily suspended with no indication of when  
11 these sites will resume. E-waste curbside collection  
12 was suspended and hazardous waste special collection  
13 programs are suspended at least one year. For 2021,  
14 these program cuts amount to \$21.1 million for  
15 curbside collection, \$3.5 million for community  
16 compost programs, \$3.5 million for E-waste curbside  
17 collection and \$2.1 million for hazardous waste  
18 programs and \$2.1 million for recycling outreach  
19 including GROW, NYC's food scrap drop-off and green  
20 market textile programs. I understand that we must  
21 achieve budget savings but I also know that we cannot  
22 remove access to recycling programs and still pretend  
23 that we are going to achieve zero waste. Some of  
24 these programs are New Yorker's only opportunity to  
25 dispose of waste safely and legally. There are



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

9

2 disposal regulations for hazardous materials or  
3 electronic wastes that will be significantly more  
4 difficult to follow if these programs are suspended  
5 without replacement. Organic waste discarded as  
6 refuse also increases our greenhouse gas emissions  
7 and reduces our access to compost and valuable  
8 alternative energy. All of this is vital to our  
9 entire city and was profoundly our economic  
10 environment of justice communities. Communities  
11 that have been feeling the effects of our lack of  
12 progress and some who have lived side by side with  
13 transfer stations should be given every opportunity  
14 to reduce the amount of waste that they are sending  
15 to landfill. We cannot allow our short-term physical  
16 crisis that leave us unprepared for the far large  
17 crisis of climate change. I look forward to hearing  
18 the S & Y testimony on how we can build on these  
19 bills and advance recycling in New York City. I also  
20 want to hear from advocates about how we can build on  
21 the work they are already doing. I hope that we can  
22 work together to create a system that will actually  
23 reduce our waste. I would like to ask Council Member  
24 Powers to give an opening statement and would like to  
25 just uhm, I guess to however much power I have as

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

10

2 Chair empower Council Member Cabrera from now just  
3 take on chairing this Committee. Again, thank you so  
4 much Cabrera and thank you guys for bearing with me  
5 as I read with one eye. I want to use that as the  
6 excuse as to why I wasn't reading well but thank you  
7 again, thank you.

8 OWEN: Council Member Cabrera. I mean  
9 Council Member Powers.

10 KEITH POWERS: Thank you Chair Reynoso, I,  
11 I feel your pain from here my friend and I hope you  
12 are doing okay and we certainly, I think everybody  
13 understands and recognizes it too. You are probably  
14 not in your best condition to do Chair today, but  
15 thank you for your leadership and partnership on this  
16 issue. I know you care deeply about our recycling  
17 and composting system here in the City. On waste  
18 issues you have been a leader here in the Council  
19 since I've been here. You also sit next to me so we  
20 get to talk about this in person when we do see each  
21 other but I am thrilled to join you in the Chair and  
22 introducing the Community Organics and Recycling Act,  
23 what we are calling the COR Act to make a clear  
24 commitment to composting and recycling in New York  
25 City and to engage New Yorkers to help make their

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

11

2 City a better place for future generations. I want  
3 to thank Borough President Brewer who I see is here  
4 today testifying in support of legislation as well as  
5 my colleagues who have signed on and to save our  
6 compost coalition to applaud for this and have held  
7 town halls and have been doing great social media and  
8 other things to make sure that New Yorkers know about  
9 it and even just in the last few days we have got  
10 hundreds of people to sign like a letter support that  
11 adds regular New Yorkers to this effort. I see some  
12 of my constituents on here so I want to say hello to  
13 them as well. We are going to be hearing my Bill,  
14 Introduction 1942 which will preserve neighborhood  
15 composting and recycling. It will allow for the  
16 recycling of organic and materials at community drop-  
17 off centers and preserve a more affordable part of  
18 the current composting program as facing proposed  
19 budget cuts even if we, and as we may suspend the  
20 curbside collection component to this. Specifically,  
21 it is required the Department of Sanitation to set up  
22 three drop-off composting sites in each community  
23 district by June 2021 which is the end date. We  
24 certainly want them to do it sooner. It requires  
25 that site to be set at places that are easily

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

12

2 accessible including for people with disabilities and  
3 close to public transportation and crucially required  
4 department to establish an outreach in education  
5 effort so communities are aware of the sites and are  
6 informed of the services that they provide. The  
7 legislation will ensure that New Yorkers will still  
8 have a way to be green and smart about their waste as  
9 well as create more equal access across communities  
10 and recycling sites and I will actually give the  
11 department credit here because they are the ones who  
12 have been in a conversation with me about this, spark  
13 some ideas around how ways we can do more community  
14 composting. Some of us have been sizing down, have  
15 it right downstairs unfortunately, not right now, but  
16 we want to make sure that every New Yorker has access  
17 to composting and recycling. So, even as we are in a  
18 pandemic and face the challenges to recovery and  
19 fiscal crisis we want to make sure that we are still  
20 upholding our commitment to mitigate the impact of  
21 climate change and if our goal here is, my goal is to  
22 get to zero waste, we cannot see the whole city set  
23 back to a time before any composting program was set  
24 up so. We are adding, this is a priority for both  
25 myself and the Chair Reynoso and many others and the

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

13

2 Borough President as well. So, I want to thank them.

3 Thank you, Department of Sanitation for being here  
4 and again thank the speaker, Jason Baldwin, all of  
5 the staff here for helping to organize this hearing  
6 today and make sure that we have a voice around this  
7 issue today, so thanks to everybody and I will look  
8 forward to. Back to you, Chair Cabrera, I think.

9 NICHOLE BEAN: I just want to.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Thank you  
11 so much and I want to.

12 NICHOLE BEAN: Hi Chair I just before we  
13 begin uhm I would like to go over some items if that  
14 is alright?

15 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Yes,  
16 please.

17 NICHOLE BEAN: So, I'm Nichole Bean,  
18 Counsel to the Committee on Sanitation and Solid  
19 Waste Management of the New York City Council.  
20 Before we begin, I want to remind everyone that you  
21 will be on mute until you are called on to testify  
22 when you will be unmuted by the host. I will be  
23 calling on panelists to testify. Please listen for  
24 your name to be called. I will periodically be  
25 announcing who the next panelists will be. We will

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

14

2 begin with testimony from the administration,  
3 followed by testimony from Manhattan Borough  
4 President Gail Brewer followed by public testimony.  
5 The first three panelists for the public testimony  
6 portion will be Eric Goldstein followed by Carlos  
7 Castell Croak followed by Justin Wood. I will call  
8 on it when it is your turn to speak. During the  
9 hearing if Council Members would like to ask a  
10 question please use the zoom raise hand function and  
11 I will call on you in order. We will be limiting  
12 Council Member questions to five minutes. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Thank you  
14 so much and I want to wish uhm Reynoso, uhm Chair  
15 Reynoso a quick recovery and prayers for that as  
16 well. So, with that Nichole I will turn it back to  
17 you for the swearing in.

18 NICHOLE BEAN: Now I call on members of  
19 the administration to testify, Commissioner Garcia,  
20 Deputy Commissioner Anderson and Assistant  
21 Commissioner Anderson. I will now deliver the oath  
22 to the administration and I will call on each of you  
23 individually to record your answers. Do you affirm  
24 to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but  
25 the truth before this committee and to respond

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

15

2 honestly to Council Member questions? Commissioner  
3 Garcia?

4 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I do.

5 NICHOLE BEAN: Deputy Commissioner  
6 Anderson?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: I do.

8 NICHOLE BEAN: Assistant Commissioner  
9 Anderson?

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: I do.

11 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. You may begin  
12 when you are ready.

13 Thank you, thank you for having me and my  
14 best wishes to you Chair Reynoso, uhm always a  
15 pleasure to be able to do testimony before your  
16 committee and good afternoon to the rest of the  
17 members of the City Council Committee on Sanitation  
18 and Solid Waste Management. I am Kathryn Garcia  
19 Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
20 Sanitation. I am joined today by Bridget Anderson,  
21 Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and Sustainability  
22 and Gregory Anderson Assistant Commissioner for  
23 Policy and External Affairs so thank you for the  
24 opportunity to testify this afternoon. Before  
25 addressing these bills specifically, I would like to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

16

2 take a moment to reflect on the challenging position  
3 that we find ourselves in as a City during this time.  
4 The COVID-19 pandemic has put immense stress on our  
5 City and our communities. The administration has had  
6 to make some difficult cuts to the budget to continue  
7 core government operations and to devote resources to  
8 essential safety, health, shelter and food security  
9 needs. This includes deep cuts to the very programs  
10 we are here today to discuss. As I mentioned at our  
11 executive budgeting hearing last month, no one is  
12 more frustrated than I am to see these programs be  
13 reduced, suspended or eliminated but it is a  
14 necessary step for our City to take due to our  
15 current budget reality. Now, more than ever we are  
16 seeing the importance of supporting communities and  
17 giving New Yorkers the tools to continue to sustain  
18 and improve their neighborhoods. I believe that the  
19 spirit of these bills endeavors to do that, to  
20 provide local, equitable opportunities for New  
21 Yorkers to reduce waste, to fight climate change  
22 through daily choices and behaviors and to bolster a  
23 culture of resource for use and reinvestment locally.  
24 Now, more than ever, we need to empower individuals  
25 and communities to keep our neighbors healthy and



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

17

2 safe. To help our City grow and thrive. We look  
3 forward to working with Council to identify and  
4 implement creative approaches to achieve the goals  
5 laid out in these bills. I am here today, sober  
6 about the challenges we face, yet optimistic about  
7 our combined passion to overcome them. Despite these  
8 challenges, we can work together to achieve our zero  
9 waste goals and we can do so by empower individuals  
10 and communities to make change. For the last five  
11 decades, efforts in New York City to conserve  
12 resources, reduce waste and achieve zero waste have  
13 often started at the community level. They've been  
14 led by residents, teachers, gardeners, non-profit  
15 organizations, block associations and small  
16 businesses. These efforts continue today in  
17 neighborhoods across the City ranging in scale from  
18 large to small. In the beginning recycling of  
19 newspaper, cans and bottles happen because of the  
20 hard work and dedication of volunteers collecting  
21 materials from their neighbors or working at  
22 community drop-off centers. It is only as a result of  
23 their work that the City enacted the Landmark Local  
24 Law 1989 which created the mandatory curbside  
25 recycling program. Today, this program is a

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

18

2 cornerstone among the City's sustainability programs  
3 and we continue to achieve year over year growth in  
4 the amount of mixed paper, and metal, glass, plastic  
5 and cartons collected. At the Department of  
6 Sanitation our approach is two-fold to support,  
7 enrich, and empower community-based efforts to  
8 recover resources for beneficial use while also  
9 ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to the  
10 tools to contribute to the city-wide zero waste  
11 effort. At times these two approaches can create  
12 healthy conflict inspiring thoughtful conversations  
13 about the merits of a program's breath of scale  
14 versus depths of engagement. We believe that both  
15 approaches are necessary to achieve our goals and  
16 that we must take a both end approach, not either/or.  
17 Organic waste is particularly suited for community-  
18 based recovery and beneficial use. When composted,  
19 food scraps and yard waste become a nutrient-rich  
20 soil amendment that can bring health and vibrancy to  
21 neighborhoods, from street trees to parks to  
22 community gardens. DSNY created the NYC Compost  
23 Project in 1993 to rebuild our City soils by  
24 providing New Yorkers with the knowledge, skills and  
25 opportunities they need to produce and use compose

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

19

2 locally. The seven New York City Compost Project  
3 Partner is located in all five boroughs, operate food  
4 scrap drop-off sites, process collected material and  
5 distribute finished compost to public greening  
6 projects around the City. They also partner with  
7 community groups for stewardship projects and provide  
8 technical assistance to local gardeners and at home  
9 composters. Since the New York City Compost Project  
10 was started in 1993 we have trained more than 800  
11 Master Composters, worked with thousands of  
12 volunteers and supported more than 225 active  
13 community compost sites and gardens. It is thanks to  
14 their passionate Community Compost that we were able  
15 to build momentum that helped her launch and expand  
16 the curbside composting program over the last several  
17 years. Before COVID-19, DSNY supported the operation  
18 of 175 food scrap drop-off sites across all five  
19 boroughs. DSNY support included funding for staffing  
20 and site operation, technical assistance, collection  
21 services and local and regional processing. Many of  
22 these sites were facilitated by our Compost Project  
23 Partners or by Bro NYC and they had a dedicated base  
24 of thousands of weekly users. While the funding  
25 cuts in Fiscal 2021 will dramatically reduce the

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

20

2 support that we are able to provide to these sites,  
3 we hope that independent community support will allow  
4 at least some of them to resume as our City begins to  
5 reopen and we will continue to provide training and  
6 technical assistance using in-house outreach staff to  
7 support our Community Composters and gardens across  
8 the City. We expect to resume financial and  
9 operational support for these partners and sites in  
10 Fiscal Year 2022. Another example of DSNYS  
11 community-based approach to zero waste is Donate NYC  
12 which helps New Yorkers give goods, find goods and do  
13 good. By donating and reusing goods instead of  
14 discarding them New Yorkers can greatly reduce waste,  
15 conserve energy and resources, save money and help  
16 provide jobs and human services for New Yorkers in  
17 need. Donate NYC also provides vital support of New  
18 York City's Reuse community, helping nonprofit  
19 organizations and local businesses increase and  
20 promote their re-use efforts. Thanks to our Donate  
21 NYC partners and other providers, New York City has  
22 more than 700 clothing and textile drop-off locations  
23 located in all 59 community districts across the five  
24 boroughs. While some of these locations may be  
25 temporarily closed due to the COVID-19, we anticipate

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

21

2 that many will resume collection as the City and  
3 State continue reopening. For some products and  
4 materials especially those that are inherently  
5 hazardous or dangerous extended producer  
6 responsibility policies offer the best approach  
7 toward safe and sustainable management. While flawed,  
8 the State's Electronic Recycling Law envisions a  
9 network of recycling options for New York Residents  
10 funded by electronics, manufacturers and retailers.  
11 We continue to have discussions with the State DC  
12 regarding the convenience standard and other elements  
13 of that Law to prove its effectiveness. Producer  
14 funded take-back programs for paint and  
15 pharmaceuticals have also recently been enacted at  
16 the State level and we look forward to their  
17 implementation in the coming months. Lastly, in this  
18 time of financial uncertainly, I would like to  
19 highlight two successful programs that operate at no  
20 cost to the City, Re-Fashion NYC was conceived in  
21 direct response to the City's 2005 waste  
22 characterization study which identified textiles as a  
23 component of New York City's residential waste stream  
24 with a high potential for reuse. Through Re-Fashion  
25 NYC apartment buildings, non-profits and commercial

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

22

2 establishments post clothing donation bins that are  
3 serviced at no cost to the City by non-profit  
4 charitable organizations who then resale these items  
5 to fund their social services. The program was  
6 possible because of years of partnership between DSNY  
7 and Reuse organizations within the City. E-cycle NYC  
8 is a parallel program for apartment buildings to  
9 collect and recycle unwanted electronics. E-cycle  
10 NYC is supported by electronic producers through the  
11 State's electronic recycling law which require that  
12 producers pay some or all of the cost of such  
13 programs. I will now turn to the two Bills that we  
14 are here to discuss. The first Bill, Intro 1942  
15 would require the Department to create at least three  
16 food and yard waste drop-off sites in each of the 59  
17 Community Districts by June 1, 2021. Each site would  
18 operate a minimum 20 hours per week and would be  
19 located in a geographic area that is easily  
20 accessible and in close proximity to public  
21 transportation. Intro 1943 similarly would require  
22 the Department to create at least three Community  
23 Recycling Centers in each of the 59 Community  
24 Districts by June 1, 2021. Like the drop-off sites,  
25 each recycling center would operate a minimum of 20

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

23

2 hours per week and would be located in a geographic  
3 area that is easily accessible and in close proximity  
4 to public transportation. The Bill envisions that  
5 the recycling centers would accept material that can  
6 be recycled over use but are not collected curbside.  
7 Such materials may include electronics, textiles,  
8 furniture and other durable goods and certain  
9 hazardous waste as practicable. The Community  
10 Recycling Centers would be co-located with the food  
11 and yard waste drop-off sites in a previous Bill. I  
12 want to thank the primary sponsors of these Bills,  
13 Council Member Powers and Chair Reynoso for  
14 introducing them and for convening the important  
15 conversation today. I support the intent of both  
16 Bills to provide local, community-based reuse,  
17 recycling and composting options especially for  
18 materials that do not already have a curbside  
19 collection program. I look forward to hearing from  
20 many advocates and activists and other New Yorkers  
21 who will testify today and share their passion and  
22 commitment for the Community-oriented solutions to  
23 zero waste and I look forward to working with the  
24 Council to have further discussions on how to achieve  
25 our mutual goals. However, given the City's current

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

24

2 dire financial situation I cannot support these Bills  
3 as introduced. At a time when many including the  
4 Council Speaker are calling for even deeper cuts to  
5 agency budgets including ours it would be impossible  
6 for DSNY to comply with a programmatic mandate of  
7 this scale. For Intro 1942, I agree that the City  
8 should offer a robust network of food scrap drop-off  
9 sites in particular neighborhoods that lack curbside  
10 composting service. Such a network existed before  
11 the COVID crisis with 175 food scrap drop-off sites  
12 operating a cross the City. When the funding for  
13 curbside composting and for the New York City Compost  
14 Project resumes in July 2021 I look forward to  
15 working with the City Council to resume both  
16 programs, Bill participation and achieve success.  
17 Intro 1943 would create an entirely new network for  
18 Community Recycling Centers. While I am certainly  
19 concerned about the cost of such an initiative, I  
20 also have some serious concerns about the feasibility  
21 of siting and the regulatory requirement that would  
22 apply. I look forward to hearing more from the  
23 sponsors and from others who have joined today to  
24 better understand the intent and scope of this  
25 legislation. As we look beyond the COVID-19 crisis I



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

25

2 want to reassure the members of this Committee and  
3 all New Yorkers who are watching at home that we  
4 remain committed to our zero waste goals. While the  
5 budget realities have cause great and unfortunate  
6 setbacks, they also offer us an opportunity to  
7 reflect to plan and as we recover to implement  
8 programs even better and more innovative than those  
9 that were cut or suspended. I look forward to  
10 ongoing conversations with the City Council and the  
11 passionate advocates and stakeholders who care deeply  
12 about these issues in the coming weeks and months.  
13 Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any  
14 questions.

15 NICHOLE BEAN: Before we begin the  
16 questions, we had some trouble capturing your answers  
17 to the Oath on Zoom so I am going re-administer that  
18 for all three of you. Uhm, do you affirm to tell the  
19 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth  
20 before this Committee and to respond honestly to  
21 Council Member questions?

22 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: I do.

23 NICHOLE BEAN: Please speak loudly.

24 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: I do.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

26

2 NICHOLE BEAN: Commissioner Garcia.  
3 Deputy Commissioner Anderson?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON: I  
5 do. I do. Can you hear me?

6 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you, yes.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:  
8 Okay (laughing).

9 NICHOLE BEAN: Assistant Commissioner  
10 Anderson?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:  
12 I do.

13 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. I'll turn it  
14 back to the Chair now.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Thank you.  
16 (SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE). Uhm Thank you  
17 Commissioner for your testimony and at this time I  
18 know I have some questions but I want to let my uhm  
19 colleagues uhm and especially the sponsor of the  
20 Bill, Powers begin with their questions and I know  
21 Darlene Call has some instructions.

22 NICHOLE BEAN: Okay, so after Council  
23 Member Powers I will call on Council Members in the  
24 order they have used the Zoom raise hand function.  
25 Please keep your questions to five minutes. The

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

27

2 Sargeant at Arms will keep a timer and I will let you  
3 know when your time is up. Throughout the question  
4 and answer period we will continue to call on Council  
5 Members to respond. Uhm, we are beginning with  
6 Council Member Powers. So, Council Member Powers.

7 KEITH POWERS: Okay, thank you, thank you  
8 for the testimony and thanks for all you are doing  
9 right now. I know there a lot on your plate, uhm no  
10 pun intended right now when it comes to what is  
11 happening in the City so thanks for all you are  
12 doing. Uhm, I hear your comments related to I guess  
13 both Bills, particularly 1942. Is the concern right  
14 now from the administration standpoint the cost of  
15 running it? Or is it alternate, or maybe it is both?  
16 Is it the cost of running it and the fiscal situation  
17 of the City or is it logistical concerns and rules  
18 and regulations that pertain to putting the program  
19 together?

20 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Certainly,  
21 so for the food scrap drop-off sites the concern is  
22 primarily financial. For the recycling centers,  
23 depending on what products or materials there could  
24 be some regulatory challenges but the other, just  
25 logistical challenges, finding locations uhm in City

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

28

2 in terms of siting that many but I mean the overall  
3 thing right now is like unless we get some funding  
4 from the Federal Government there are likely to be  
5 more cuts rather than expansion of any programs.

6 KEITH POWERS: And what the cost for  
7 Intro 1942, estimate what would be the cost to put  
8 that in place?

9 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: So, for the  
10 food scrap drop-off one it is 175 sites that we run  
11 now, I believe it costs us about \$3 million a year.

12 KEITH POWERS: Got it, which I mean, I am  
13 as wide-eyed as anybody else when it comes to cuts  
14 but the \$3 million I think for us is a very small  
15 fraction of the entire puzzle here and then also you  
16 know clearly keep some of our goals in place but if  
17 we were to receive federal aid or other aid through  
18 borrowing or something else is it, is it fair to say  
19 that the administrations position might change if the  
20 fiscal situation changed for the City?

21 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Oh, I think  
22 definitely particularly for like the food scrap drop-  
23 off program or the compost project and some of those,  
24 if the, if we end up with enough money, uh, you know  
25 I think the conversation is very, very different, but

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

29

2 if we don't and unfortunately I don't think they are  
3 likely to pass anything federally before the end of  
4 this month when we need to adopt a budget, you know  
5 it's, it's just a really challenging financial time.  
6 So, I go up and down on where I think the Senate will  
7 land on whether or not they will be willing to  
8 provide us with the type of resources and the amount  
9 of resources we would really need to keep moving this  
10 forward but you are right, normally, in a normal year  
11 that budget would be a round dinger. The Office of  
12 Management and Budget is pushing everyone to go find  
13 every rounding error that we possibly can. Uhm,  
14 because of their concern about the revenue stream.

15 KEITH POWERS: Okay I got it. Uhm, well  
16 we hope if there is revenue. I mean we will, we will  
17 fight, I know myself and the Chair together restore  
18 it anyway in this budget but understanding fiscal  
19 situation if there is more funding I think we will  
20 certainly be looking to partner with you to find ways  
21 to bring this back. Uhm, the uhm budget pro.. you  
22 know the cuts, the curbside organics and community  
23 composting and for one year during Fiscal Year 2021.  
24 Can you just tell us the cost of just per ton of  
25 disposing organics versus refuse?

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

30

2 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Um, so the  
3 cost is about, it is about \$4 difference for ton uhm  
4 between organics and uhm refuse; however, the way the  
5 refuse contract works is that because there are fixed  
6 costs in it, you don't get to fully net out the cost  
7 of refuse disposal.

8 KEITH POWERS: Okay, so would there be  
9 near terms savings achieved to the City, to the City  
10 if organic material is diverted back to, is diverted  
11 from our refuse stream?

12 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: No.

13 KEITH POWERS: No? Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: That's why  
15 it's a savings. If it actually saved me money, I  
16 probably would have gotten to keep it.

17 KEITH POWERS: Right, now I understand.  
18 What is the amount of organic tonnage that was  
19 collected for Fiscal Year 2019? And prior to COVID  
20 in 2020? What is the amount of organic tonnage that  
21 was collected curbside?

22 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Uhm.

23 KEITH POWERS: At the drop-off sites?

24 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Sure, I am  
25 going to see if Deputy Commissioner Bridget Anderson

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

31

2 can answer that because I don't have the historic  
3 numbers in front of me.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:

5 Sure, uhm for the drop-off sites there were 3,000  
6 tons collected. Uhm for the curbside program it was  
7 about 50,000 tons. I think you had asked both  
8 questions.

9 KEITH POWERS: What was the first answer,  
10 sorry. The first one?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:

12 About 3,000.

13 KEITH POWERS: 3,000, Okay. And if  
14 currently if people want to divert their organics  
15 from landfill what are their options?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:

17 So, their, their options really are what they can do  
18 either in their homes or their backyards at this  
19 point in time.

20 KEITH POWERS: Okay and our community  
21 garden composting programs still allowed to operate?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:

23 They have not been yet in terms of the green, if they  
24 are on Green Thumb property, I don't believe that the  
25 Parks Department has reopened those at this point in

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

32

2 time. Uhm for anyone who is planning to reopen we  
3 have provided guidance to people about and that is on  
4 our website about how to do it safely uhm but I  
5 believe many of the sites are on Parks property and  
6 Parks has not yet permitted reopening of those. Those  
7 will be able to reopen and we think there are some  
8 community gardens and such that rely on primarily  
9 volunteers and can actually compost on their site who  
10 will reopen and do that uhm but we just haven't quite  
11 gotten into that phase yet.

12 KEITH POWERS: Has Parks given you any  
13 sort of guidance on when they will be able to accept  
14 drop-offs again?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON: Uhm  
16 no I think that we are waiting a little bit, at least  
17 until Phase 2.

18 KEITH POWERS: Phase 2. Okay and what  
19 response have you received from Community Compost  
20 Program regarding the Budget cuts?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON: I  
22 think as you would expect. I think they are very,  
23 very disappointed. I've heard from many of them and  
24 uhm and I mean I follow the petitions. I know how  
25 people feel and the reason we've been successful at



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

33

2 all in removing is their real passion and commitment  
3 to this program so I think there's, there's an over-  
4 arching sadness.

5 SARGENT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:

7 Okay.

8 KEITH POWERS: That's my time. I just  
9 want to ask maybe one or two more questions if that  
10 is okay from some notes we have here. Uhm I took  
11 activity gardens, advocates have suggested to us that  
12 Community Gardens have received grants that enable  
13 them to process compost, would DSNY factor that in it  
14 is passed?

15 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: So, you mean  
16 private non-profit grants?

17 KEITH POWERS: Yeah, I believe so.

18 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: So, if they  
19 are, if they are able to raise money on their own for  
20 some of the processing or other issues that would  
21 come from that. You know, we will provide technical  
22 support, we will provide outreach, those are sort of  
23 what we still have in our tool kit at this point in  
24 time.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

34

2 KEITH POWERS: Okay, just a couple of  
3 more and then I will hand it back over. Thank you to  
4 Chair Cabrera. What can be done to make an easier  
5 process collecting organics locally rather than as I  
6 understand we transport them upstate? So, rather  
7 than transporting upstate, what can we do to make it  
8 easier to process collected organics locally?

9 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Well, I  
10 think one of the things is that the biggest challenge  
11 that we have about processing it locally is finding a  
12 site to do it on. Uhm that is, that has been the  
13 ongoing issue, it is pretty intensive in terms of the  
14 amount of land use that you need, uhm you know we  
15 have also tried to partner with the Department of  
16 Environmental Protection so that we can turn it in to  
17 a bio gas, the food scraps, but for doing a more  
18 normal compost sites that you may have seen. You  
19 need, you need space and many of the New York City  
20 Compost Project folks are under a lot of pressure for  
21 the sites that they are on, even now, even without  
22 budget cuts.

23 KEITH POWERS: Yeah okay and uhm if we  
24 pass this Bill or we came to an agreement and we had  
25 funding for it would you be open to hear community

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

35

2 input on the compost sites that were chosen if we  
3 were doing three per site and how do you imaging that  
4 process works?

5 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Right now,  
6 we would certainly be open to working with all of the  
7 stakeholders in this. We usually do try and have  
8 those ongoing conversations. We have a lot of  
9 interactions with many of the people who are on this  
10 panel all the time about where those locations are  
11 but you know definitely near public transportation  
12 has been very successful in certain areas, but  
13 sometimes we get it wrong and we have to move it. You  
14 know it doesn't, say the uptake isn't there and then  
15 we've changed locations to see if we could get better  
16 participation at a different location. So, we are  
17 really willing to be flexible.

18 KEITH POWERS: Is there a formal process  
19 you envision or is it uhm ongoing conversation  
20 dialogue or is there process by which folks would be  
21 able to nominate or sites that are in their  
22 community?

23 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Uhm, so  
24 often times it is, they will nominate sites but then  
25 as we go through a process in terms of whether or not

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

36

2 that makes sense given can they support the site? Do  
3 we have the right resources to support the site?

4 KEITH POWERS: Okay, I'm going to stop  
5 there just out of respect for everybody else who is  
6 waiting to ask questions. I may have a few more  
7 later but I have to run to a Budget meeting shortly  
8 but thank you to Chair Cabrera for giving me the time  
9 and thanks to Commissioner and I just want to say  
10 thank you to all the folks who have been working with  
11 us on this. I am encouraged to hear that if there is  
12 some funding that you are open to doing something  
13 here. I think we should find the funding this year  
14 like \$3 million is just so minimal but I understand  
15 that we have to be a little uhm this is a very  
16 difficult year but uhm we will get you to talk about  
17 ways if funding becomes available to do this. So,  
18 thanks for your testimony.

19 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Thank you.

20 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you Council Member  
21 Powers. Next, we will hear from Council Member Cohen  
22 followed by Council Member Chin. Council Member  
23 Cohen.

24 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

37

2 ANDREW COHEN: Thank you very much. It is  
3 good to see you Commissioner.

4 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Nice to see  
5 you.

6 ANDREW COHEN: Uhm I know we've talked  
7 about you know really how heartbroken we are about  
8 the situation in terms of composting. Uhm, you know  
9 I am concerned about what you think, sort of the  
10 long-term impact in getting people to participate  
11 because you know you and I, you came up to my  
12 district, we kicked off curbside collections in the  
13 district together. Uhm but getting people, like it's  
14 a culture change and a way of thinking that this is  
15 really going to set us back. I'm wondering if you  
16 could just talk a little about what you think the  
17 impact will be in terms of if and when we get back  
18 to, to being able to do this uhm how much you know we  
19 are going to lose in terms of people's participation?

20 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: So, I am  
21 very cognizant of the experience that we had after 9-  
22 11 when recycling was cancelled and then came back  
23 and it came back slightly differently uhm that we  
24 will lose ground during this particular year. Uhm  
25 and I know that that means that we are going to have

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

38

2 to think really strategically around how we plan for  
3 bringing it back uhm to make sure that we are re-  
4 engaging with everyone in the community but we also  
5 need to work together about like what is our overall  
6 pact toward getting toward a mandatory program and  
7 making it so that you know we are invested both in  
8 making sure that people understand what to do but  
9 also that they are doing it.

10 ANDREW COHEN: Can you talk about a  
11 little bit about; I mean you probably did and I  
12 missed it and I apologize. Uhm, where we were at in  
13 terms of participation either both curbside and do,  
14 we know how many people were using the drop off  
15 sites.

16 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: So, we  
17 don't have a counter. It is probably best what  
18 Deputy Commissioner Anderson said which was about  
19 3,000 tons in the drop-off sites and about 50,000  
20 tons in the curbside program.

21 ANDREW COHEN: I mean that doesn't sound  
22 you know relative to how much trash that you move it  
23 doesn't sound like that much.

24 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: It is still  
25 a small percentage I mean obviously it is not

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

39

2 available to everyone and it was voluntary and so  
3 you know we get a lot of different outreach including  
4 some campaign style outreach things, door to door  
5 education but still it has been one of the challenges  
6 with the program is getting people to participate.  
7 So, we have some folks who are very, very dedicated  
8 and some folks who were less dedicated. Uhm I'm  
9 just going to give I think I had mentioned this to  
10 you and it is in housing and buildings but I have a  
11 good Bill that would require new, new construction to  
12 build infrastructure in the building for organics  
13 collection. I hope that after COVID we get to hear  
14 that Bill, I would love your thoughts on it. Uhm,  
15 thank you Chair Cabrera, thank you very much.

16 NICHOLE BEAN: Next, we will hear from  
17 Council Member Chin. Council Member Chin.

18 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 MARGARET CHIN: Thank you, thank you  
20 Chair, thank you Commissioner for your testimony. I  
21 have a couple of questions out of the 175 sites that  
22 you talked about.

23 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh

24 MARGARET CHIN: Do they include all the  
25 farmer market sites in the City?

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

40

2 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes, yeah.

3 MARGARET CHIN: Uhm, okay that is  
4 unfortunate because that is where a lot of my  
5 constituents, you know I see them on the weekend  
6 dropping things off, dropping their food scrap and it  
7 is like a ritual, I would definitely need to find a  
8 way to continue that. Uhm, the other thing is that  
9 have you looked at Governor's Island? Uhm, because  
10 Earth Matter is out there and we tour Governor's  
11 Island like during the summer, uhm I mean they have a  
12 really big composting program out there.

13 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh.

14 MARGARET CHIN: They compost all the food  
15 scrap on Governor's Island itself and right now they  
16 still got a lot of land. I mean it hasn't been  
17 developed yet and so there may be an opportunity to  
18 really utilize that space to expand the composting  
19 program. I mean you could take the food scrap by  
20 tugboats or whatever, but that is some place that I  
21 think we really need to look at, especially in the  
22 short-term and my third point is that this is  
23 improvement district throughout the City. I think  
24 they are all an important resource that could help us  
25 with community drop-off sites for composting uhm



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

41

2 because you know they are part of the community, they  
3 work with small businesses but they also work with  
4 residential property owner and they have the, the  
5 people, the staff that can manage some of the drop-  
6 off site so I think we should really reach out to  
7 some of the especially the one that represent a large  
8 residential area and see if they can be a partner uhm  
9 in this time when you know when we don't have the  
10 budget but they might be a good resource to help us.

11 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Thank you  
12 Council Member, I am going to think that those are  
13 two really interesting points about using Governor's  
14 Island, it might take us a little time to figure out  
15 how to get things to Governor's Island I don't think  
16 we could use tugboats. Uh but.

17 MARGARET CHIN: Well, you should talk to  
18 Governor's Island like I can help you. You know they  
19 have more ferries and you know you could borrow the  
20 tugboat from the South Street Seaport Museum. It just  
21 is a resource I mean they got a lot of space and they  
22 already do composting.

23 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Yeah.

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

42

2 MARGARET CHIN: So, I think it is just  
3 great you know that we can use them to help us. And  
4 what about the Business Improvement District?

5 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: So, the  
6 Business Improvement District is like we will reach  
7 out to them uhm about how that might be something  
8 that could be useful. I need to think about it a  
9 little bit, about how they would fit in but I think  
10 that you are right there. Always a resource to us in  
11 anything that we do, whether or not it is on waste or  
12 cleaning they have always been central to how we  
13 think about ensuring those commercial corridors stay  
14 in good shape.

15 MARGARET CHIN: Yeah, I'll be happy to  
16 reach out to the one in my District and also with  
17 Governor's Island uhm so let me know.

18 COMMISSIONER KATHRYN GARCIA: Okay we  
19 will.

20 MARGARET CHIN: If you need the help with  
21 that. Thank you, thank you Chair.

22 NICHOLE BEAN: Chair Cabrera seeing no  
23 more Council Member questions should we move to  
24 public testimony?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

43

2 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Yes

3 please. And we want to also recognize that we were  
4 joined by Council Member Brannan. Thank you  
5 Commissioner I appreciate your testimony and I know  
6 these are difficult times and hopefully we will get  
7 help from the Federal Government. If we don't,  
8 these are going to be very difficult days. Very  
9 difficult. Far more than anything we have ever seen  
10 so it my hope that we do get the help. And so, with  
11 that, uhm this wraps up the administration's  
12 testimony. I will turn it over to Nichole who will  
13 go over the procedure for public testimony.

14 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. We will now  
15 turn to public testimony. I would like to remind  
16 everyone that unlike our typical hearings we will be  
17 calling individuals one by one to testify. Council  
18 members who have questions for a particular panelist  
19 should use the raise hand function in Zoom and I will  
20 call on you after three panelists have completed  
21 their testimony. For panelists, once your name is  
22 called a member of our staff will unmute you and the  
23 Sargeant at Arms will give you the go ahead to begin  
24 upon setting the timer. Please wait for the Sargeant  
25 to announce that you may begin before delivering your

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

44

2 testimony. We will be starting with Manhattan  
3 Borough President, Gail Brewer. Following her  
4 testimony, the next panel will be Eric Goldstein  
5 followed by Carlos Casteel Croak followed by Justin  
6 Wood. The Manhattan Borough President.

7 GAIL BREWER: Thank you very much. I am  
8 Gail Brewer, Manhattan Borough President and I  
9 certainly want to thank interim Chair Cabrera, uhm  
10 certainly Council Member Powers and I hope Chair  
11 Reynoso feels better. I am a co-sponsor of both  
12 Intro 1942 and Intro 1943 and I fully support  
13 establishing drop-off centers for New Yorkers to  
14 recycle and organic materials in the 59th community  
15 districts. I don't need to tell you that from my  
16 perspective, these centers are crucial to ensure that  
17 the City continues toward zero waste by 2030. These  
18 centers in every community will expand recycling in  
19 an equitable way opportunity to drop-off food scraps,  
20 e-waste and textiles into districts that have not yet  
21 been served by organics. I also the members of the  
22 committee to consider the following recommendations  
23 as you work on the passage of both Bills. In the  
24 districts, public, NYCHA housing often exists and it  
25 leaves one of the three required community recycling

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

45

2 centers we think should be sited even within a  
3 development or a location that is accessible to the  
4 NYCHA residents. The NYCHA location would also  
5 accept food scraps I would hope. When determining  
6 where to establish drop-offs sanitation needs to work  
7 with NYCHA's really wonderful sustainability team and  
8 with the residents under consideration before  
9 decisions are made. And once a location is chosen,  
10 NYCHA is selected I hope that everyone would work on  
11 education and knowledge. Community centers can also  
12 serve as collection sites for disposing  
13 pharmaceutical waste. As you know, we have a very  
14 active Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board know as  
15 SWAB and that particularly committee analyze or reach  
16 of State Legislation which allows retail pharmacies  
17 to register as pharmaceutical waste collectors and  
18 install collection boxes to take back drugs and other  
19 unused controlled substances. You know that is a  
20 problem if you keep them around. SWAB found that  
21 almost no pharmacy in Manhattan had installed  
22 collection boxes nor were the pharmacies on site  
23 aware of their store's ability to do so. SWAB  
24 members could only confirm one pharmacy in Union  
25 Square that had a box. So, with the shortage of

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

46

2 collection opportunities outside of annual national  
3 prescription drug takeback days which we have all  
4 participated in and periodic safe disposal events  
5 this committee should work with the Sanitation  
6 Department and the Department of Health on the State  
7 level consider included pharmaceutical place is a  
8 part of the centers. Finally, I want to reiterate as  
9 you know the importance of education in others that  
10 is always needed. New Yorkers need to know about the  
11 centers in order to participate and as this wonderful  
12 City Council continues to work out the details of the  
13 FY21 Budget, I know the challenges, I really urge  
14 that there be sufficient funding for alerting the  
15 public about community recycling centers and  
16 encourage recycling in general. Thank you for the  
17 support and support of recycling expansion, organic  
18 collection throughout the City of New York and I hope  
19 we can pass Intro 1942 and Intro 1943. Thank you  
20 very much.

21 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you, Council Member  
22 Powers.

23 KEITH POWERS: Thank you, thank you  
24 Borough President, it is nice to see you. Thank you  
25 as always for everything you do in my district and

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

47

2 Borough. You talked a little bit about education.

3 First of all, I like the suggestion around, around

4 public housing and I think it is one that we will

5 look at and I appreciate that. And also even where I

6 live in size and town like advocate organized

7 neighborhood where you can really kind of coordinate

8 is extremely helpful for us but for people that live

9 outside of the complexes where it seems so people

10 don't know what even composting in, so some people I

11 think in my district how easy it is and then also get

12 some logistical hurdles to getting people what they

13 need to be able to do it. Do you have any thoughts or

14 recommendations on how we together educate

15 constituents let's say in Manhattan or anywhere else

16 about how to do it? And also, how to ease people in

17 to it and make it easier for people to be able to do

18 it? I have lots of neighborhoods in my district

19 where it seems like people, we can look I'm sure

20 there is a map of usage somewhere but where it seems

21 like there is a tremendous opportunity to increase

22 participation?

23 BOROUGH PRESIDENT GAIL BREWER: I hate to

24 keep bringing up the schools but it is like that is

25 how we started recycling was the kids started doing

2 it and then they asked their parents why they  
3 weren't. So, as you know it has not been a great  
4 success at the schools. And we started out on the  
5 upper west side eight parents, eight schools. I  
6 remember it well. And then it spread citywide but has  
7 not gone really well. So, I think to answer your  
8 question, again this is a tremendous loss if we don't  
9 continue it but I think we have to focus on the  
10 schools and make sure they are doing it and the kids  
11 participate. We had at some point you know volunteer  
12 one, a guidance counselor, somebody, we tried to get  
13 them some extra funding that didn't work out, working  
14 with the kitchen staff and then working with the kids  
15 to have some kind of competition. You know you got to  
16 work on your lunch, you got to make sure it goes into  
17 the right bin etc. and I do think that is the way to  
18 start to be honest with you. Is to get the school to  
19 do it right, they are not doing it right now.

20 KEITH POWERS: That is the hardest hurdle  
21 for the school I imagine is just getting the students  
22 to be able to sort out and the staff to be able to.

23 BOROUGH PRESIDENT GAIL BREWER: Because  
24 as soon as you compromise a bin as you know.

25 KEITH POWERS: Right.



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

49

2                   BOROUGH PRESIDENT GAIL BREWER: Then the  
3 end result is not good and the Land Use end result  
4 company is not going to take the scraps. So, that's  
5 been our problem without getting in to so many  
6 specifics. I think uhm Bridget knows this only too  
7 well and that is after a lot of work. I mean there  
8 was work put into this uhm but it just takes more.  
9 And then you know so, I don't know how else to say  
10 it. I think, I know my block does it so it is very  
11 haphazard as to which block or which development.  
12 Obviously NYCHA would be a huge difference. I only  
13 talk about the rats. If you get rid of organics in a  
14 positive way then you are not going to have rats and  
15 that's where I wish we could have more conversation  
16 because that's a good education. A good public  
17 relation, don't talk about organics, talk about rats  
18 and that's when you get people's attention. The  
19 answer to your questions is schools and rats.

20                   KEITH POWERS: Yeah, alright, gotcha, okay  
21 thank you, thanks for the testimony.

22                   NICHOLE BEAN: We will hear from Council  
23 Member Lander.

24                   BRAD LANDER: Pretty much, Chair Cabrera  
25 it is good to be with you and I am going to ask this

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

50

2 question of the next panel as well but I would love  
3 the Borough President's take on it. Uhm, Borough  
4 President you know obviously I represent a district  
5 like the one that you used to represent in the  
6 Council with a lot of people so eager to participate  
7 in the Organics Program and so like you, we've taken  
8 a kind of a you know, Coalition of the Willing  
9 approach. Let's get people where they are excited  
10 and go with kind of a voluntary energy approach and  
11 on the one end, I've loved that you know my, my  
12 block, a lot of my neighbors really like doing it. It  
13 is so sad about the program being lost but I wonder a  
14 little now that we are looking at the fact that we  
15 build a program that doesn't actually save us money  
16 because it is not at the full scale that we need for  
17 the City. Do you think? I mean we got to do what  
18 we can in this year's budget to preserve and save  
19 pieces of this program but as we are looking longer  
20 term, do you think we need to consider options that a  
21 little less coalition of the willing and a little  
22 more like it becomes mandatory it is the law of the  
23 City or, I don't know, what are we going to do to  
24 build a program that gets out beyond you know a few  
25 pockets where people love doing it because the only

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

51

2 way to get to zero waste is something with a fuller  
3 adoption.

4                   BOROUGH PRESIDENT GAIL BREWER: Yeah, I  
5 agree with you and tell you also if you get to a  
6 certain point and you know I'm not allowed to ask  
7 questions but that would have been a question for the  
8 City because there is a demarcation where it ends up  
9 re-stabling and not cost and so what is that uhm that  
10 milestone. What is the metric? That would be  
11 another question that I would love to get answered. I  
12 think ideal has a number; I don't know what the  
13 City's number is. So, unless we have the whole issue  
14 which is also controversial about the ways in which  
15 going down the sink is another opportunity which I  
16 know DEP doesn't often like. So, think all of this  
17 has to be considered because we cannot have these  
18 heavy loads and we need it for composting. I mean  
19 there is just so many ways that organics needs to not  
20 be in the landfill, for cost reasons and for rats  
21 which is those my issue for the composting. So, it  
22 really need attention and as you know the worst thing  
23 to do is to stop the program because then people you  
24 know out of site, out of mind, so I am very concerned  
25 about it and I wish that we could hopefully at least

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

52

2 an intra-measure could be instituted but it needs to  
3 have a whole year of process from commercials to  
4 schools. The schools are a challenge, I mean we've  
5 been trying to eight years so they need a real heavy  
6 support mechanism of some kind to. But that is one  
7 for one lunch plus breakfast. That is a lot of  
8 organics.

9 BRAD LANDER: Thank you.

10 NICHOLE BEAN: Do any other Council  
11 Members have questions for the Manhattan Borough  
12 President? Seeing none. Next, we will hear from Eric  
13 Goldstein, followed by Carlos Casteel Croak followed  
14 by Justin Wood. Eric.

15 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Thank you Council Members  
17 Cabrera, Power, Lander, Borough President Brewer and  
18 best wishes to Chairman Reynoso. My name is Eric  
19 Goldstein and I am the NYC Environment Director at  
20 the Natural Resources Defense Council. One of the  
21 often over looked facts about environmental history  
22 in New York City is that going back to the beginnings  
23 of the Environmental Movement it has frequently been  
24 the City Council not the Mayor's office that has  
25 instigated positive environmental policy changes for

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

53

2 all City residents. That has been the case throughout  
3 the decades and it was illustrated again last year  
4 when under the leadership of Speaker Johnson, the  
5 Council passed landmark Climate Change Legislation.  
6 Indeed on the composting issue the City Council  
7 wisely began steering the City in the right direction  
8 almost a decade ago when in 2013 to pass local law 77  
9 creating what became the largest voluntary  
10 residential organics collection curbside program and  
11 that same year had passed Local Law 146 establishing  
12 a smart program for separating and collecting  
13 organics from restaurants and other food service  
14 establishments. Even back then the Council understood  
15 that composting organics was critical to ending the  
16 City's global warming emissions and recycling trash  
17 into useful compost. The de Blasio Administration  
18 has said the right things but somehow the  
19 administration has lost its way on this issue. It has  
20 already eliminated the curbside organics pilot  
21 program and it has done so having despite having the  
22 commitment in its 2015 NYC Sustainability Claim to  
23 expand and serve all New Yorkers. City Hall  
24 apparently views organics collection as a frivol  
25 operation like the afterschool clarinet program

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

54

2 rather than the essential sanitation service it is.

3 This is short sided and ill-advised. It will boost

4 the City's contribution through emissions from

5 landfills, they will pull the rug out from under

6 growth in New York City on the lower east side and

7 college center, big reuse, Earth Matters and local

8 botanic ordinance across the City. They have been

9 operating successful programs for composting on a

10 shoestring budge for many years. It will leave 10s

11 of thousands of New Yorkers without a way to sustain.

12 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Rules of the organics.

14 Two last points, the Mayor's proposal provides the

15 perfect opportunity for the Council to act and most

16 important step is to restore \$7 million in funding to

17 preserve community composting. This is a drop in the

18 bucket compared to the \$107 million that has been

19 crossing the DSNY Budget and as the Council explores

20 ways of cutting back on the New York City Police

21 Department Budget in accordance to enhanced need and

22 social programs will moved support, we suggest that a

23 tiny portion of those reallocated funds need to set

24 aside to support the \$7 million request. Finally, we

25 strongly support two very sensible pieces of

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

55

2 legislation before the committee. We detailed the  
3 reasons for doing that in our written testimony uhm  
4 and we believe that Commissioner Garcia cares about  
5 these issues but we urge you to find funds in the  
6 existing budget to at least keep this program alive  
7 and to work seriously with the project sponsors to  
8 advance these Bills. In regard to Council Member  
9 Lander's question, ultimately the Council should  
10 enact a new law requiring the mandatory separation of  
11 discarded organics and the curbside collection of  
12 these materials from every City household, that is  
13 the only way that we will make this program be able  
14 to stand on its two feet and actually made funds for  
15 the City taxpayers. Finally, we are grateful to the  
16 Council staff, especially Nichole Bean, Asher  
17 Freedman, Abigail Bressler and Laura Pulpa for  
18 focusing on this important issue when the issues of  
19 the Coronavirus and systemic racism have justifiably  
20 occupied so much public attention. We thank everyone  
21 on the Council staff for making this an important  
22 issue and for seeking to address it today.

23                   NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you, as a reminder  
24 to Council Members we will be asking for questions  
25 after three panelists. The next we will hear from

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

56

2 Carlos Casteel Croak followed by Justin Wood followed  
3 by Tok Michelle Oyewole.

4 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 NICHOLE BEAN: Carlos.

6 CARLOS CASTEEL CROAK: Good afternoon, my  
7 name is Carlos Casteel Croak and I am a  
8 representative from New York League of Conservation  
9 Voters. NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New  
10 York City and we are committed to advancing a  
11 sustainability agenda that will make our people, our  
12 neighborhoods and our economy healthier and more  
13 resilient. I would like to thank Chair Reynoso, Chair  
14 Cabrera and Council Member Powers for the opportunity  
15 to testify today. In 2015, Mayor de Blasio made a  
16 pledge that excited environmentalists and citizens  
17 alike. This pledge was to reduce the waste we send to  
18 landfills by 90% by the year 2030. And here we are,  
19 five years later, having made little progress toward  
20 the zero-waste goal. Now, due to COVID 19 and the  
21 recession, the Mayor has suspended curbside  
22 collection of organic waste and for posing to cut  
23 funding for community composting. While these cuts  
24 are upsetting to see, we understand that the  
25 financial strain of our City must be addressed.



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

57

2 Whoever would like to use these cuts as an  
3 opportunity to re-evaluate, revamp and expand our  
4 waste diversion programs and that we come out of this  
5 crisis and achieve zero waste by the original 2030  
6 deadline. Intro 1942 and 1943 would be a crucial  
7 step in the journey to our zero waste goals. By  
8 establishing three community drop off sites per  
9 community district New York City will be able to  
10 continue its composting, recycling efforts even as  
11 curbside collection is suspended, bringing these  
12 recycling opportunities to every community district  
13 is a crucial step toward the more ethical waste  
14 diversion program. We are pleased that these Bills  
15 would provide opportunities to recycle materials such  
16 as textiles and electronic waste in addition to  
17 organic waste. It is also crucial that we maintain  
18 the recycling culture that we have already  
19 established and that we saw when the metal, glass and  
20 plastic recycling program suspended during the post  
21 9-11 recession when our recycling programs are cut it  
22 is a struggle to recover when the programs are  
23 reinstated. We are also the Council to restore \$7  
24 million in the Fiscal 20-year budget for existing  
25 community compost selection sites. This would not

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

58

2 only provide an outlet for New Yorkers that continue  
3 to recycle their organic waste but also maintain  
4 dedicated composting personnel at the \_\_\_\_\_, lower  
5 eastside college center and other.

6 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 CARLOS CASTEEL CROAK: Operated either  
8 central or community-based programs. Our goal of  
9 zero waste by 2030 is an achievable one but we must  
10 make decisions and establish programs that work  
11 toward it. Not cut the programs necessary for us to  
12 make progress. We urge the Council to pass Intro  
13 1942, Intro 1943 and reinstate the \$7 million for  
14 community composting and budget, help New Yorkers  
15 continue to recycle their organic waste. Thank you  
16 for the opportunity to testify today.

17 NICHOLE BEAN: Next we will hear from  
18 Justin Wood followed by Tok Oyewole followed by  
19 Durexene Hullair (SP?).

20 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 NICHOLE BEAN: Justin.

22 JUSTIN WOOD: Hello and good afternoon, my  
23 name is Justin Wood. I am the Director of Organizing  
24 and Research at the New York Lawyers for the Public  
25 Interest and a member of the Save Our Compost

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

59

2 Coalition. I want to thank Council Members Powers,  
3 Chair Reynoso and co-Chair Cabrera for moving so  
4 swiftly to introduce and have a hearing on these  
5 Bills, after learning that funding for both curbside  
6 and community drop-off collections of organic waste  
7 and textiles were suspended due to budget cuts  
8 imposed by the Mayor. We also want to specifically  
9 thank Speaker Corey Johnson for scheduling this  
10 important hearing on this ongoing crisis of policing,  
11 public health and mass unemployment of the City and  
12 thank the members of the Black, Latino and Asian  
13 Caucus for announcing a plan to reduce the NYPD  
14 budget by \$1 billion. An urgent step needed to  
15 reform our massive police department and to  
16 mitigating the devastating cuts to other vital  
17 services in the Mayor's proposed budget including  
18 DSNY Recycling, organics and community education  
19 programs as we have been hearing about today. NOBI  
20 strongly supports the principals of the COR Act and  
21 urges the Council to pass it immediately after making  
22 any amendments necessary based on the testimony we  
23 have heard today. In particular, these Bills  
24 assurance that all communities will host at least  
25 three accessible and equitably sited recycling drop-

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

60

2 off sites will help to ensure that communities  
3 historically excluded from recycling and compost  
4 programs can fully participate and learn about the  
5 benefits of waste reduction convenient to home.  
6 However, like some of the other panelists our most  
7 urgent request is that the Council use the Budget  
8 Negotiating Process to insist on restoring the very  
9 modest \$7 million in funding needed for community  
10 drop-off sites and community education programs run  
11 by DSNY and its non-profit partners to immediately  
12 resume operations. While the COR Act will ensure that  
13 the City gives all New Yorkers the option to recycle  
14 and compost it may take up to a year to implement  
15 even if passed quickly. By acting immediately..

16 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 JUSTIN WOOD: Okay thank you very much,  
18 so, we also support strongly the restoration of \$7  
19 million in the budget so we can get this up and  
20 running quickly and we also hope to work with Council  
21 on a citywide mandatory organics program that is  
22 really what we need as several Council Members  
23 mentioned to create good green jobs and move the  
24 needle on climate change. Thank you very much.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

61

2 NICHOLE BEAN: If Council Members have  
3 questions for the panel that just spoke, please use  
4 the Hand Raise Zoom function now. We will begin with  
5 Chair Cabrera.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Thank you  
7 so much Nichole. Great job today and I want to thank  
8 the panelists. I want to followup and I appreciate  
9 your testimony, very insightful with Manhattan  
10 Borough President Gail Brewer's comment. Do any of  
11 you happen to know uhm regarding her question and the  
12 economy, really if I understood the question right  
13 the economy of scales when it comes to organics. At  
14 what point do we see more of a gain than a loss in  
15 comparison to other types of waste?

16 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Yes uhm, Council Member  
17 Cabrera, let me see if I can quickly um see if I can  
18 answer that question. There are two costs to  
19 disposing of waste, one is the cost of getting rid of  
20 the waste or the trash at the end of the line. That's  
21 the tipping fee. There it costs less to dispose of  
22 food waste and yard waste because they can be turned  
23 into valuable commodities, compost, so if you are  
24 taking your food waste or yard waste to a composting  
25 facility or anaerobic digestion facility you will pay

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

62

2 less per ton to dump that trash than you would if you  
3 have to send the waste to a distant landfill or  
4 incinerator where the cost could be up to \$130 a ton  
5 and those costs have been going up for the City for  
6 years. So, in order to make composting and organics  
7 collection set, with 10s of millions of dollars per  
8 tax payer residents we just have to make sure that  
9 the cost of collecting that trash are equivalent to  
10 the cost of collecting ordinary waste today and there  
11 should be no reason why it isn't because it is still  
12 the same amount of trash. You need to have full  
13 trucks of organics in the same way that you have now  
14 full trucks of regular trash. That can only be done,  
15 the experience in Seattle, San Francisco and Portland  
16 show by having a mandatory composting program. So,  
17 you have the same amount of waste that you are  
18 collecting but you are collecting it in an organics  
19 truck, in a recycling truck and then in a truck that  
20 collects whatever is left over and by rescheduling  
21 and revamping your collection system according to  
22 each neighborhood's needs you are able to get those  
23 collection costs to be equivalent whether it is the  
24 existing program organics and you are saving money in  
25 the disposal costs at the end of the line. So, as

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

63

2 Council Member Lander said, once we get the Council  
3 to enact a mandatory composting program, mandatory  
4 composting organics collection program and give the  
5 City time to work out the kinks to get the system  
6 right, to figure out what went right and what went  
7 wrong with the voluntary pilot project, the City  
8 taxpayers can be saving 10s of millions of dollars a  
9 year by sending all of our food waste and yard waste  
10 to composting operations. It also creates in-City  
11 jobs, it's more equitable from an environmental  
12 justice perspective and of course it will put a big  
13 dent in climate change because landfills are the  
14 third largest source of methane emissions in the  
15 United States. So, if the City is looking at these  
16 issues from a long-term perspective that is where we  
17 need to be heading.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: So, Eric,  
19 help me here and I, I don't want to be long but, you,  
20 you literally put all of the green checks in every  
21 single item uhm which, which matters at the end of  
22 the day. So, you are giving it great value for us to  
23 go this way. The only one that she said that I  
24 heard, the Commissioner, you were there. I was  
25 watching you. Was that if it made economic sense then

2 we will go. She will be on board. Is there something  
3 that uh because obviously because of the budget  
4 constraints right now is there something that is not  
5 translating here in terms of what you are saying. I'm  
6 sure you had plenty of conversations.

7 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Let me try one more time,  
8 the existing voluntary program has as Council Member  
9 Lander said the participants of the willing.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Right.

11 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: And what that means is  
12 the City has been sending around the Sanitation  
13 Department, an extra truck to collect food waste and  
14 yard waste. Since it has been voluntary, some people  
15 have been participating, some not. As a result,  
16 those trucks go back empty or half empty or a third  
17 empty. That's inefficient and therefore it costs  
18 more. If you have a mandatory program, folks will be  
19 putting out their food waste in much larger  
20 quantities. You will be able to reroute your trucks  
21 and reschedule your systems for collection and you  
22 will be having food trucks, food waste trucks that  
23 are full just like regular trash trucks.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Right.



2 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: And in that case, the  
3 labor costs will be equivalent because it is the same  
4 amount of waste but you will be saving money on every  
5 ton that you send to a composting facility rather  
6 than to an expensive out of state landfill.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: So, Eric, I  
8 get all of that, I get all of that. My big question  
9 is why not pull the trigger here, since what you are  
10 saying makes more sense, especially if you have the  
11 economy of skills that you place there. Right? So,  
12 that's, and I don't understand why the pushback from  
13 the Administration when it a can save us more money  
14 and at the same time we have uhm, we are answering  
15 the economic you know constraints that we have right  
16 now but at the end of day it is going to save us  
17 money, you know.

18 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Well, the last thing I  
19 will say is the Administration agrees with that  
20 philosophically, Commissioner Garcia has been a big  
21 supporter of Mandatory Organics Collection and the  
22 Mayor in his 2015 Sustainability Report said we are  
23 going to do this and we are going to have collections  
24 for all New Yorkers by the end of 2018, so  
25 philosophically they are there as well know right now

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

66

2 it is in the middle of two separate significant  
3 crisis and the budget people in City Hall are just  
4 looking at the next six months and that may be the  
5 right thing for them to do but for the City Council  
6 we expect our representatives to take a longer term  
7 view of what is best for all of the people in this  
8 City over the years to come and there is no doubt  
9 that restoration of this tiny \$7 million to keep  
10 these programs that have been successfully operating  
11 on a shoe string alive and then to plan in the fall  
12 for passage of a mandatory organics program that  
13 would phase in after you analyze what went right what  
14 went wrong, you come up with a plan how to reschedule  
15 your collections and how to do it efficiently and  
16 working with the unions that would support this and  
17 that would be done by the Council in the fall.  
18 Hopefully the Administration would support that  
19 because (1) in that first year when we are facing our  
20 biggest budget crisis there will not be any budget  
21 crisis there won't be any consequences. You are  
22 really asking the sanitation department to study what  
23 went right and what went wrong with their pilot  
24 project and then to begin developing an

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

67

2 implementation plan that would take place in the out  
3 years.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: Thank you  
5 Eric. You have 110% support and we will continue here  
6 in the Council and other Committee and you have a  
7 true champion in the Chair and Council Member Powers  
8 and all of the Committee Members we are standing with  
9 you 100% and let's get to the finish line. It just  
10 makes sense all around. I just wanted you to say and  
11 putting on the raker.

12 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Thank you so much  
13 Council Member Cabrera, we appreciate your support.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERNANDO CABRERA: I want to  
15 recognize that we will be also joined by Council  
16 Member Chaim Deutsch and Constantinides. And with  
17 that I will turn it back to Nichole for any other  
18 Council Members who may have questions.

19 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
20 hear from Council Member Lander.

21 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 BRAD LANDER: Thanks very much and I  
23 joined a little, a little late so maybe this got  
24 asked of the Commissioner but I think with this panel  
25 it is a good place to ask too. I just want to make

2 sure that we for the record draw out the  
3 Environmental Justice Issues here and really  
4 understand the ways in which failing to stand up a  
5 more comprehensive organics programs leads to  
6 additional truck traffic in long-time communities of  
7 color with all the attendant asthma and health risks  
8 that go along with that and what we could imagine if  
9 we get to the other side of this, uhm, so I wonder  
10 whether one of the panelists could speak to that?

11 JUSTIN WOOD: Uhm, I think Eric touched  
12 on all of these things and thank you Council Member  
13 Lander and co-chair Cabrera for your questions. Uhm,  
14 I think one thing just to stress is that organics  
15 recycling in particular leads to a lot more jobs  
16 cumulatively. All of the studies show this than  
17 exporting waste to landfills and incinerators and uhm  
18 and it can lead to a lot more in City and New York  
19 City jobs and these can be good high-quality green  
20 jobs, union jobs, living wage jobs so it is a chance  
21 both to reduce the diesel truck emissions and train  
22 emissions and pollution PM 2.5 and all of these  
23 things that we now know are linked to COVID and so  
24 many other diseases, a chance to reduce those  
25 emissions particularly in communities that have

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

69

2 bourne the brunt of living near transfer stations  
3 geared toward exporting waste uhm and then it is also  
4 a chance to create a lot of good in City jobs and try  
5 to target those jobs and that infrastructure  
6 development to communities that are also being hit  
7 the hardest by mass unemployment and I know other  
8 panelists will have a lot to say on this. Uhm, just  
9 one other note I mean at the beginning of the crisis  
10 there were some new data coming out of the cities  
11 like Seattle showing that on the economies and scale  
12 question they had indeed by getting such wide spread  
13 compost and organics recycling reduced their cost uhm  
14 to the point that it was lower than or at most  
15 equivalent to landfills so these costs really can be  
16 brought down while creating a lot more jobs and  
17 reducing both local emissions and carbon emissions.

18 BRAD LANDER: Uhm that's great, thank you  
19 I was going to ask about what cities had seen  
20 reductions but I think between that and some of what  
21 Eric said in his answer to Chair Cabrera earlier that  
22 was really helpful. So, thank you very much.

23 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Seeing no more  
24 Council Member questions, we will move on to the next  
25 panel. We will hear from Tok Michelle Oyewole and

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

70

2 then followed by Theoricene Hoare and Justin Green.

3 Tok.

4 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 TOK MICHELLE OYEWOLE: Hello. Thank you

6 to the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste

7 Management for the opportunity to speak today and a

8 speedy recovery to Chair Reynoso. Uhm, my name is Dr.

9 Tok Michelle Oyewole and I am testifying on behalf of

10 the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance

11 founded in 1991. NEJA is a non-profit citywide

12 membership network linking grassroot organizations

13 from low-income neighborhoods and communities of

14 color in their fight for environmental justice. For

15 decades, NEJA has lead efforts for a comprehensive

16 policy reforms to address the disproportionate burden

17 of New York Solid Waste System on a handful of

18 environmental justice communities. To handle nearly

19 35,000 tons of garbage generated each day in New York

20 City waste trucks needlessly drive thousands of miles

21 per night through multiple boroughs in New York City

22 polluting our air with diesel fuel, clogging our

23 streets and diminishing our quality of life. The

24 impacts are greatest in those few low-income and

25 communities of color where truck dependent transfer

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

71

2 stations are clustered causing high proportions of  
3 health consequences such as asthma, heart disease and  
4 cancer. Today we are testifying to urge the City to  
5 not sidetrack its climate justice and zero waste  
6 goals by eliminating opportunities for recycling  
7 organics and other wastes. In the short-term, we  
8 urge the City to immediately restore food scrap drop-  
9 off sites by funding them at the relatively small  
10 amount of \$7 million. Additionally, passing the COR  
11 Act would increase access to food scrap and textile  
12 recycling for all New Yorkers including in the outer  
13 boroughs and NYCHA residences. Local organics  
14 processing can divert ways from truck to transfer  
15 stations clustered in the Environmental Justice  
16 Communities in New York City. Completely eliminating  
17 all forms of organics collection means that the  
18 majority of this waste will go to the intermediary  
19 local transfer stations then to landfills and  
20 incinerators in EJ communities outside of the City.  
21 A better solution would be to process this organic  
22 waste locally which in the long-run could reduce cost  
23 from truck transport and tipping into facilities.  
24 This requires the City to make a commitment to

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

72

2 increasing its local organics processing capacity in  
3 the very near term. Some of the drop-off sites.

4 SARGEANT AT TERMS: Time expired.

5 TOK MICHELLE OYEWOLE: Okay just a few  
6 quick points. Uhm some of the drop-off sites selected  
7 should be coupled with processing capacity to ensure  
8 that we are streamlining, processing organic waste at  
9 a local level. We want to ensure that the collection  
10 programs do not cause harms in EJ communities by  
11 injuring or optimizing truck routes. Uhm using  
12 collection with zero and low emission vehicles when  
13 possible uhm cutting just 5% of the NYPDs, \$516  
14 million overtime budget would provide around four  
15 times the amount of funding to restore this  
16 composting program. Uhm, our members have a long  
17 history of advocacy in terms of textile and e-Waste  
18 recycling and have shown that the educational  
19 component is critical in its efficacy. And yeah there  
20 is more but I will submit this in the written form.  
21 Uhm and you know in closing today I've made the case  
22 for the importance of immediately restoring drop-off  
23 sites and increasing the equity and access of drop-  
24 off sites and co-locating drop-off sites and organic  
25 processing in the short-term but we re-iterate the



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

73

2 urgency of introducing legislation for mandatory  
3 organics and increase organics processing capacity  
4 citywide. Together these pieces of legislation would  
5 enable access to convenient recycling on various  
6 waste streams for all residents, diverting 1/3 of  
7 waste from landfills, incinerators, polluting  
8 clusters of transfer stations and enable New York to  
9 locally process organics and providing a lot of jobs  
10 to black and brown residents in our communities.

11 Thank you.

12                   NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
13 hear from Yorsane Hallare (SP?) followed by Justin  
14 Green followed by Christine Davis Romero.

15                   SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16                   YORSANE HALLARE (SP?): Good afternoon and  
17 thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My  
18 name is Yorsane Hallare (SP?) and I am the founder of  
19 Green Scene, a Bronx-based environmental consulting  
20 firm using hip-hop sustainability through compost  
21 education and green technology. As I work through  
22 Green Scene Organics, we adopt the principals of  
23 environmental justice, waste equity and a circular  
24 economy. Our model is designed to collect and  
25 process organic waste locally. One NYC the plan by

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

74

2 the Mayor's office for New York City to confront our  
3 climate crisis however the removal of the organic  
4 collection program through Mayor de Blasio's proposed  
5 budget is in direct conflict with these goals to be  
6 achieved by 2015. Our ability as a City to maintain  
7 these initiatives even in diverse times is what makes  
8 us a leader in the same District in which it was  
9 generated. As a grounds person I believe that  
10 organic waste should be collected and processed in  
11 the same district in which it was generating,  
12 considering only a few poor neighborhoods that are  
13 environmental justice communities bear the burn of  
14 the City's refuse with the south Bronx being one of  
15 them. Access to drop-off locations at acceptable  
16 scrap and textile recycling at each community  
17 district can bring us to a more sustainable and  
18 equitable future yet many other factors must be  
19 considered. Mandating a budget line item and having  
20 explicit language around resource allocation within  
21 Dany's budget is imperative to ensure there are  
22 penalties for not prioritizing this in the future  
23 making sure that education and outreach have ample  
24 funding through Community-based organizations to  
25 carry out the large diverted food waste in landfills

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

75

2 and showing that drop-off locations within each  
3 community district are not sited in the neighborhood  
4 with the lowest median incomes. Out of the three  
5 drop-off locations and have at least one that  
6 actually processes the organic waste so it doesn't  
7 have to be trucked out making the hiring process for  
8 these drop-off sites transparent while mandating that  
9 NABE businesses be allowed to participate in this  
10 effort you must prioritize people of color who live  
11 in these neighborhoods to lead and control how the  
12 decisions that affect us are made as we increase  
13 local processing capacity. Saving the infrastructure  
14 that already exists the of a supreme importance.  
15 While IC acts as a step to mandatory curbside  
16 collection which is really how we reach an equitable  
17 solution for New York City residents we must fight to  
18 make sure that we restore the land if newly  
19 composting. There is an already established network  
20 and we must honor the relationships built on the  
21 ground while figuring out how to grow this and allow  
22 access for others who get involved.

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 YORSANE HALLARE (SP): May not physically  
25 be able to make it to drop-off location until whether

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

76

2 it is because of disability or time constraints. We  
3 believe we must introduce and pass legislation  
4 mandating for citywide and mandatory curbside organic  
5 collection. We envision a society where resources  
6 and benefits are equally shared and where people play  
7 a role in community and decision making and to a  
8 degree that they are affected. So, in closing, we  
9 support Intro 1942 and 1943 with the aforementioned  
10 amendment and see as a stepping stone to a larger  
11 vision for effaceable waste system that does not put  
12 all the burden on just a few low-income communities  
13 and communities of color. I will leave you with a  
14 mark of the time. Land is the basis of freedom,  
15 justice, equality, inclusion equal black bodies, new  
16 institutions equal the economy circular democratic  
17 and solidarity. The point is that the power lies  
18 with the people, your contribution is equal, lets  
19 support the truth, strategic in what we do. Pass the  
20 COR Act with some changes of a few. So, we committed  
21 to NYC and how we see the future of our City green  
22 but it takes a little more than just equity reflected  
23 in a money and policies. Thank you.

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

77

2 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
3 hear from Justin Green followed by Christine Datz-  
4 Romero, followed by David Heard. Justin.

5 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 JUSTIN GREEN: Hi, I'm Justin Green. I'm  
7 the Executive Director of Big Reuse. Big Reuse is a  
8 nonprofit organization that works for zero waste in  
9 New York City for community composting outreach in  
10 our Reuse Center. We created innovated and social  
11 ways to enterprise over the years living wage, green  
12 jobs and job training app opportunities and I wanted  
13 to thank uhm Chair Reynoso, Chair Cabrera, Council  
14 Member Powers, Council Member Lander and everyone  
15 else who supported these efforts to reinstate  
16 composting, all the community groups out there. So  
17 much, such as outpouring support for composting it  
18 has been really overwhelming to see that. We support  
19 at the Big Reuse the COR Act to re-open, extend  
20 equitably, distribute food scrap drop-off sites for  
21 composting throughout New York City, unstaffed food  
22 scrap drop-off sites are a cost-effective way to  
23 provide access to composting for New Yorkers.  
24 Composting is really an essential service that is  
25 just continually funded. The Climate Crisis in 2020

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

78

2 is on track to be the hottest year on record for the  
3 planet. The impacts of climate change in communities  
4 around the world the hardest. Those communities  
5 will suffer devastating consequences from our actions  
6 as one of the wealthiest and most influential cities  
7 in the world. Funding saved by curbside composting  
8 and community composting accounted for approximately  
9 \$26 million, equivalent to 12 days of NYPD overtime  
10 last year. We can reinstate all composting for 12  
11 days of NYPD overtime. Organic waste in landfills  
12 generate methane. Methane is 86 times more powerful  
13 than carbon dioxide at warming the Earth over two  
14 decades and it greatly increases warming because of  
15 the power of absorbing radiation. Mandatory curbside  
16 collection and community composting are essential and  
17 should be reinstated immediately as part of our  
18 responsibility to fight climate change. If mandatory  
19 curbside can't be immediately reestablished the COR  
20 Act will help New York City get back on track. In  
21 order to achieve the goals of the COR Act the \$7  
22 million of the current budget cuts to community  
23 composting and community food scrap drop-offs.

24 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

79

2 JUSTIN GREEN: 175 drop-off sites could  
3 be re-established while operating community  
4 composting sites at Big Reuse. So, we applaud your  
5 efforts and really think we need to keep going with  
6 reinstating the current funding and the COR Act as  
7 well so thank you.

8 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Do any Council  
9 Members have questions for the previous panel? If  
10 so, please use the Zoom raise hand function now.  
11 Seeing no questions, we will move on to the next  
12 panel. We will hear from Christine Datz-Romero,  
13 followed by David Heard followed by Ceci Pineda.  
14 Christine.

15 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 NICHOLE BEAN: Christine.

17 CHRISTINE DATZ-ROMERO: Yes, sorry, I  
18 thought the host will unmute you. Unmute me. Okay,  
19 uhm, we will start all over again. Thank you for the  
20 opportunity to testify today, my name is Christine  
21 Datz-Romero. I am the Executive Director of the  
22 Lower Eastside Ecology Center who started its  
23 programs in 1987 by offering community-based  
24 recycling opportunities for paper, bottles, cans, by  
25 creating drop-off programs. Today, we provide E-Waste

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

80

2 and composting services and environmental stewardship  
3 opportunities and educational programming. We are  
4 testifying in support of the COR Act to implement  
5 community-based recycling drop-off opportunities that  
6 create equitable access to environmental programs and  
7 green jobs while reducing the burden of truck traffic  
8 to these transfer stations located in communities of  
9 color. The city needs to immediately restore the \$7  
10 million cut that will need to provide NYC and New  
11 York City Compost Project Partners which the Ecology  
12 Center is part of. These existing programs offer 170  
13 food scrap drop-off sites across the five boroughs  
14 and compost education to hundreds of community groups  
15 to build up their own composting programs. The  
16 instrumentation of the COR Act allows for an  
17 opportunity to build on what was created over the  
18 last 30 years, for that, the existing program needs  
19 to stay in place. The Ecology Center has surrounded  
20 community-based composting programs since 1990 and  
21 has been the Manhattan Partner of the New York City  
22 Compost Project since 2005. Each week, we serve  
23 approximately 3,500 households with 10 drop-off  
24 locations within a three-mile radius of the East Part  
25 Compost Yard. We have created a hyper-local close



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

81

2 loop system distributing the finished compost to  
3 local community gardens and parks. The program  
4 contributes directly to the health of our community,  
5 creates green jobs and job training opportunities and  
6 office community engagement and education. The COR  
7 Act is a vehicle to create more community drop-offs  
8 in the five boroughs and we urge that together with  
9 creating drop-off opportunities.

10 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 CHRISTINE DATZ-ROMERO: Efforts should be  
12 made to create local process and capacity for organic  
13 waste. In closing, we would like to urge the City  
14 Council to restore the \$7 million in FY21 for  
15 community-based composting and education programs,  
16 implement the COR Act by including more local  
17 composting processing sites and pass legislation for  
18 a mandatory organics collection program. Thank you.

19 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
20 hear from David Hurd. Followed by Ceci Pineda,  
21 followed by Kathy Nazarre. David.

22 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 DAVID HURD: Good afternoon Chairman  
24 Reynoso, Co-Chair Cabrera and Council Member Powers  
25 and members of the committee and thank you for the

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

82

2 opportunity to testify as part of the COR Act today.

3 My name is David Hurd and I am the Director of Zero

4 Waste Programs at GrowNYC. GrowNYC has played a

5 pivotal role in helping improve the environmental

6 quality of life in New York City for 50 years.

7 Personally, I've been working in recycling and

8 composting in New York City since 1980. The proposed

9 executive budget eliminates organic recycling in New

10 York City as well as additional DSNY Services

11 designed to reduced sending waste to landfills. The

12 eliminates undercut the progress the City has made in

13 diverting food scraps and yard waste from landfills.

14 A major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The

15 elimination of all funding for recycling, outreach

16 and education and composting of organic waste is

17 short-sided and will have long-term negative

18 implications setting the City back further from its

19 goals of zero waste to landfills, greenhouse gas

20 reduction and environmental justice. We have seen

21 what happened when recycling programs are terminated.

22 You don't go back to square one, you move behind it.

23 The Residential Recycling Program in New York City

24 has yet to achieve to levels of diversions prior to

25 2001 before the portions of the program were

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

83

2 suspended by Mayor Bloomberg after 9/11. We support  
3 the ambitious and equitable goals of the COR Act;  
4 however, in order to create the community recycling  
5 centers proposed in the act we believe that the top  
6 priority and the urgent need is for the City Council  
7 to restore the \$6.3 million in funding, the GrowNYC  
8 and the New York City Compost Project that is posed  
9 to be cut in the Fiscal 21 budget. This restoration  
10 could bring back the 175 food scrap drop-off sites  
11 that we collectively manage where activities were  
12 suspended on March 22. This would bring the City  
13 Council very close to the COR Act goal of 177 sites.  
14 Without restoring funding these Bills will be unable  
15 to achieve their objectives. The eight organizations  
16 affected by these cuts represent the backbone of  
17 community-based recycling and composting in New York  
18 City. The funding for GrowNYC Zero Waste School  
19 Program has also been eliminated and represents an  
20 additional \$972,000 not reflected in the proposed  
21 budget cut of \$2.8 million for recycling education.  
22 We request that this funding be restored as well.  
23 This restoration will be critical as New York City  
24 Public Schools are anticipated in re-open in  
25 September. Organic quantities improve by 103% on Zero

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

84

2 Waste School routes compared to 22% non-Zero Waste  
3 routes.

4 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 DAVID HURD: The COR Act is sensible  
6 legislation that we support but that we see as a  
7 second step after restoring funding to GrowNYC and  
8 the New York City Compost Project to continue to move  
9 our City closer toward zero waste in an equitable  
10 manner. We cannot squander the progress in waste  
11 diversion that we have made over the past three  
12 decades and must restore the budget cuts to  
13 community-based composting and recycling education  
14 and pass the COR Act to bridge us to the future of  
15 citywide mandatory curbside collection. I would like  
16 to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the  
17 opportunity to speak with you today and for proposing  
18 this important legislation, I look forward to working  
19 with you and its implementation.

20 NICHOLE BEAN: Okay, thank you. Next, we  
21 will hear from Ceci Pineda, followed by Kathy Nazarre  
22 (SP?) followed by Matthew M. Civello.

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 NICHOLE BEAN: Ceci.  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

85

2 CECI PINEDA: Good afternoon. My name is  
3 Ceci Pineda and I am the Executive Director of BK  
4 ROT. We are New York City's first bike-powered food  
5 waste hauling and composting service. Our project is  
6 staffed by young people of color in Bushwick. A  
7 special thanks to our Council Member Reynoso, Powers  
8 and others for advancing this critical issue. At BK  
9 ROT we understand how interlinked our environmental  
10 and climate crisis are to the systemic violence  
11 against black, indigenous and brown communities. We  
12 started as a Grassroot Response to a lack of  
13 composting options, excess waste infrastructure and  
14 high unemployment rates for black and brown youth in  
15 Bushwick. We strive to create, adjust and regenerate  
16 model, invest in our soils and our community. Mayor  
17 de Blasio's proposed cuts eliminate several services  
18 essential to community health. Today, I call  
19 attention to the concerning cuts to organics  
20 recycling. Over a third of the City's is compostable  
21 yet sending this material to landfills amplifies  
22 toxic air black and brown communities breathe and  
23 contributes to lasting climate impacts which  
24 disproportionately impacts the same communities  
25 around the world. We ask the Council to take the

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

86

2 following actions to advance community composting  
3 options and equity. Immediately to restore at least  
4 \$7 million of funding toward community composting to  
5 support operating over 170 drop-off sites, community  
6 education and local processing sites. We urge an  
7 additional expansion of funds for community outreach,  
8 education and composting options to serve communities  
9 of color previously excluded from DSNYS composting  
10 services. The Council can easily fund this, following  
11 calls from black organizers to reallocate at minimum  
12 \$1 billion from the NYPD budget and instead invest  
13 them in the well-being and health of black  
14 communities. BK ROT supports the COR Act and we  
15 propose the following recommendations. We urge the  
16 City to invest in local facilities to process organic  
17 waste. This reduces economic, environmental and  
18 health costs, transporting materials longer distances  
19 and also makes finished compost readily available for  
20 community use. Close models, opportunities, local  
21 employment opportunities as well as.

22 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 CECI PINEDA: Composting. Just a few  
24 more points on this. This is a critical educational  
25 component that transforms our relationship to waste

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

87

2 while also increasing the local food and climate  
3 resilience. Also, our collection vehicles must be  
4 zero or low emissions vehicles which also creates  
5 local employment opportunities and reduces local air  
6 pollution and carbon emissions. Our collection sites  
7 should be equally distributed with consistent hours  
8 and ideally staffed by local community members who  
9 are best fit to communicate and educate their  
10 neighbors. We must prioritize serving communities  
11 like NYCHA residents historically left out of easily  
12 available composting options, we recommend hiring  
13 local community members to leading community  
14 engagement and educational campaigns for successful  
15 participation. Lastly, the City should ensure  
16 community composting organizations and social  
17 enterprises are supported in continuing to build the  
18 systems and infrastructure to guarantee that all New  
19 Yorkers have access to organics, recycling and  
20 composting. There is a wealth and knowledge and  
21 resources held among those of us who have been  
22 collecting organic waste and maximizing our  
23 efficiency and capacity to process organic waste into  
24 compost on small plots of land. We recommend the

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

88

2 committee engage these stakeholders in development of  
3 the COR Act. Thank you for your time.

4 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Do any Council  
5 Members have questions for the previous panel? If so,  
6 you can zoom raise hand function now. Seeing no  
7 Council Member questions, we will move on to the next  
8 panel. First, we will hear from Kathy Nazarre (SP?),  
9 next we will hear from Matthew M. Civello and then we  
10 will hear from Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli. Kathy.

11 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

12 KATHY NAZARRE (SP?): Thank you Nichole.  
13 Good afternoon Chair Reynoso, Councilman Powers and  
14 Committee Members. Thank you for the opportunity to  
15 speak today. I'm Kathy Nazarre (SP?) Council for  
16 Committee of Women and concerned citizen. I urge you  
17 to pass Intros 1942 and 1943. We all know we are in a  
18 climate crisis and that blacks and Hispanics are at  
19 increased risk of the devastating health impacts and  
20 premature death due to toxic colonialism. While  
21 COVID-19 has put the City on pause, either the  
22 climate crisis nor resultant death will wait for us  
23 to return to normal. So, I commend you for getting  
24 us back on track with composting. The pandemic taught  
25 us the need to find equitable cost efficient multi-



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

89

2 dimensional solutions that require working together  
3 as a community. How can we do it expeditiously. Step  
4 1: Restore the roughly 175 GrowNYC drop-offs. 2:  
5 Have drop-off and processing at the same location.  
6 This would eliminate transport and process needs as  
7 well as carbon emissions. Nearly 2/3 of the City's  
8 536 community gardens have the infrastructure to  
9 collect and compost on site. While not all have the  
10 same capacity, they can scale up with minimal funding  
11 from DSNY for equipment and staff. For this to work  
12 the gardens must have legislative protection from  
13 real estate developers. 3: Include the nearly half  
14 of the BLEs 1800 schools citywide plus universities  
15 that compost and enlist local non-profit, black  
16 associations, bids and community boards that want to  
17 help. 4: Composting must be equitable. With scale  
18 up NYCHAs Urban Farm and Garden Composting for NYCHA  
19 residents. Residents should be hired to run it  
20 followed by DSNY after completing free training from  
21 Green City Force. Doing it on site creates a closed  
22 loop system. It also addresses their leak issue and.

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

24 KATHY NAZARRE (SP?): I'm almost done.

25 There is interest if need equitably. 5: Set up drop-

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

90

2 offs in grocery store parking lots in the outer  
3 boroughs. 6: Create a rebate program for further  
4 collectors who already have the infrastructure to  
5 pick up the multi-family building. I have shared some  
6 of these ideas with the Speaker and Council staff and  
7 I am happy to work with you on this. In order for  
8 this to work, there must be ample funding for  
9 education, for buildings and folks like myself who  
10 want to do it at home. I would also ask that the  
11 sites be operational by October 31st. Lastly, let's  
12 bring back the safe drop-off sites for E and  
13 hazardous waste. I thank you for your time for the  
14 past Intro 1942 and 1943, Chair Reynoso I hope you  
15 feel better soon and thank you.

16 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
17 hear from Matthew M. Civello followed by Meredith  
18 Danberg-Ficarelli, followed by Emily Bachman.  
19 Matthew.

20 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

21 MATTHEW CIVELLO: My name is Matthew  
22 Civello and I am Chair of the Manhattan Solid Waste  
23 Advisory Board and the Manhattan SWAB. I am  
24 testifying on its behalf regarding Intros 1942 and  
25 1943 otherwise know as the COR Act. Mayor de Blasio's

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

91

2 proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget eliminates  
3 residential organics collection and processing  
4 program in the City of New York as it left 3.5  
5 million New York City residents, many of whom live in  
6 Manhattan with no alternative but to place their  
7 organic waste into the landfill or incinerator bound  
8 garbage. The emails received by the Manhattan Solid  
9 Waste Advisory Board over the past several weeks  
10 indicates that this has been a difficult adjustment  
11 for many New York City residents who participated in  
12 these important programs. As these programs sit  
13 dormant, they become more difficult to restart and we  
14 stand to lose much of the hard-earned dedication and  
15 behavior change in residents who participated in  
16 them. If they are not restored the City is throwing  
17 away a foundation that could eventually support a  
18 successful mandatory curbside organics diversion  
19 program implementing an effective organics collection  
20 and processing program. This is the single most  
21 important step that New York City can take to achieve  
22 its stated goal of sending zero waste to landfill and  
23 incineration. Given the severity of the budget-cut  
24 crisis that New York City faces, there is a sensible  
25 path forward to ensure that we can preserve and

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

92

2 protect the progress we have made in collecting and  
3 diverting organics. First, the budget cuts to the  
4 community composting program should be restored.  
5 This would require a small \$7 million to restore  
6 GrowNYC program and New York City Compost Project  
7 Partners and a significant portion of the 170 drop-  
8 off and community education sites in operation before  
9 the cuts. For Manhattan, this funding restoration  
10 would re-active the bio-composting and processing  
11 education and outreach of two major composting  
12 facilities. The lower Eastside Ecology Center and  
13 on Governor's Island Earth Matter. Both of these,  
14 crucial members of the New York City Compost Project  
15 have provided education and outreach to 10s of  
16 thousands of New York City residents over the years.  
17 Second, following the restoration of this funding,  
18 the next important step is to pass Intros 1942 and  
19 1943.

20 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

21 MATTHEW CIVELLO: The COR Act, the  
22 subject of this hearing, implementing the COR Act  
23 will move the City closer to a goal of zero waste to  
24 landfill and incineration and a more equitable  
25 manner, Intro 42, 1942 would extend food and yard

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

93

2 waste drop-off locations to areas previously not  
3 served by the program by establishing three drop-off  
4 locations per community district. Manhattan Solid  
5 Waste Advisory Board supports this equitable  
6 extension, we request that Intro 1942 be amended to  
7 specify that all material collected at the drop-off  
8 sites be sent to the refunded compost projects and  
9 amended to ensure that the continuation of important  
10 education, outreach and technical community support  
11 for gardens and composting efforts. Intro 43, 1943  
12 provides for the equitable distribution of three  
13 textile recycling centers in each community district.  
14 The Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board supports  
15 this expansion. Third, we look forward to seeing the  
16 Council introduce legislation committing the City to  
17 a mandatory residential curbside organics collection  
18 program that would represent a significant step  
19 toward a zero waste New York City. We thank Chair  
20 Reynoso and the members of the committee for  
21 consideration of our testimony. Thank you.

22 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
23 hear from Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli, followed by  
24 Emily Bachman, followed by Claire Fontaine. Meredith.

25 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

94

2 MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: Thank you.

3 My name is Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli. I am the  
4 Director of Common Ground Compost, LLC. We are a  
5 zero-waste services company helping businesses and  
6 residents divert food scraps and recyclables from  
7 landfills and we run Reclaimed Organics, a bicycle-  
8 power micro-hauling operation that serves businesses  
9 and residents in Manhattan. Since the Mayor defunded  
10 residential organics programs, we have played an  
11 education and coordination role among new and  
12 emerging micro-haulers and processors. Enterprising  
13 individuals from across the boroughs have reached out  
14 to us for advice and guidance to build and launch  
15 organics diversion programs and services in their  
16 communities in response to the sudden void of food  
17 scrap drop-offs and curbside collection. Organics  
18 are special. Unlike plastic, glass, metal and paper  
19 that are most effectively processed in massive  
20 volumes to achieve economy and scale, organics can  
21 remain even within an individual's apartment and be  
22 effectively recycled. Food scraps can be walked to  
23 community gardens or collected by foot and  
24 consolidated for processing in community scale  
25 compost facilities. Organics can be organized at

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

95

2 micro-scale transfer stations to be collected and  
3 processed at Commercial scale near the City. Rather  
4 than just talking about it, we should build a system  
5 that keeps 100% of the City's organic waste within  
6 150 miles of the City. This goal would require  
7 investment in education, job training and  
8 infrastructure. This approach would also create many  
9 more employment opportunities that are currently  
10 involved in our City's waste management supply chain.  
11 One that disproportionately burdens on communities  
12 and depends on so-called waste energy facilities in  
13 landfills. We must take every opportunity to make  
14 the best of the economic disaster we are currently  
15 living through. We are asking to at an absolute  
16 minimum restore \$7 million to allow GrowNYC and the  
17 \$4 million known as NYC Compost Project Sites to  
18 immediately reopen. With equal urgency, we ask the  
19 City to expand the drop-off locations to include  
20 communities that were not previously served. Climate  
21 change will affect all of us and the services we  
22 provide to mitigate the impacts of climate change  
23 must also be available to all.

24 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

96

2 MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: It should  
3 not be limited to residential organics. Just one  
4 more point, uhm but should have the opportunity to  
5 generate revenue to support the employment  
6 opportunities therein a suggested fee structure,  
7 standard operation procedures, safety guidelines,  
8 training tool kits, troubleshooting and of course  
9 data collection tools can all be developed and  
10 provided by the City. Individuals can be empowered to  
11 educate their neighbors about why composting and  
12 organics diversion matter uhm and a variety of other  
13 re-user care and other diversion programs can also be  
14 centered at these sites. Thank you for your time,  
15 Council Member Reynoso I hope you feel better.  
16 Thank you everyone.

17 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Do any Council  
18 Members have questions for the previous panel? If so,  
19 please use the zoom raise hand function now. Seeing  
20 no questions, we will move on to the next panel.  
21 First, we will hear from Emily Bachman, followed by  
22 Claire Fontaine, followed by Oliver Wright. Emily.

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

24 EMILY BACHMAN: Thank you Chair Reynoso  
25 and members of this committee for allowing me to



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

97

2 voice support for Intro 1942 of the COR Act today.

3 My name is Emily Bachman and I am here as a

4 representative of the New York City Community

5 Composting Coalition. On behalf of over 7,000 New

6 Yorkers who have signed our petition to save

7 community composting. We appreciate that the COR Act

8 seeks to reopen, expand and equitably distribute food

9 scrap drop-off sites throughout the City during the

10 extended suspension of the curbside organics program

11 and we agree with the COR Acts underlying principal

12 that composting is an essential service that must

13 continue to be funded in the New York City budget and

14 that food scrap drop-off sites are the most cost-

15 effective way to maintain access to this service for

16 all New Yorkers. As others have noted, I cannot

17 stress enough that successful implementation of the

18 COR Act requires that we first reverse \$7 million of

19 proposed budget cuts, that you eliminate all funding

20 for GrowNYC Zero-Waste programs and New York City

21 Compost Project. All of the other eight non-profit

22 organizations that could restart the services

23 immediately and begin to expand once the COR Act is

24 passed. In the last few months our City has made

25 short-sided budget decisions that effectively abandon

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

98

2 our commitments to zero waste, climate resilience and  
3 environmental justice by eliminating all public  
4 funding for residential composting. The proposed  
5 budget creates a landscape where composting is only  
6 available to privileged New Yorkers with the ability  
7 to pay private companies to do the work our City  
8 should do. If you haven't seen a food scrap drop-off  
9 site before the photo behind me is of the largest one  
10 in the country Grand Army Plaza Brooklyn where 900  
11 New Yorkers were bringing over 3000 pounds of food  
12 scraps each week, all of which were composted by New  
13 York City Compost Project hosted by Earth Matter on  
14 Governor's Island. I am highlighting just one of 170  
15 citywide food scrap drop-off sites.

16 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

17 EMILY BACHMAN: And just one of six local  
18 processing sites that have been cut from the  
19 sanitation budget since March and that will remain  
20 closed for at least the next year if the current  
21 proposed budget does not change but that could reopen  
22 immediately following reversal of these budget cuts.  
23 So, I will skip the rest and just thank you guys for  
24 listening to us and thinking creatively about cost-  
25 effective community-based solutions to composting and

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

99

2 recognizing that we have to find a creative way to  
3 continue doing this work. Thank you.

4 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
5 hear from Claire Fontaine, followed by Oliver Wright,  
6 followed by Wylie Goodman. Claire.

7 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

8 CLAIRE FONTAINE: Can you hear me?

9 NICHOLE BEAN: Yes, now we can.

10 CLAIRE FONTAINE: Okay, alright good. Uhm  
11 my name is Claire Fontaine and I live in the Village  
12 East Area in Village East Towers. We had recently  
13 implemented the uhm Browns Bin Program. It took about  
14 a year to persuade everybody to get involved in it  
15 and now it has been pulled out from under the rug  
16 from us which is difficult because a lot of people  
17 have gotten used to the idea of being able to recycle  
18 their organics and they do not have any place to do  
19 it. Uhm, implementing the COR Act would go a long  
20 way in helping people continue with this process. I  
21 mean the thing is that you just can't cut people off,  
22 you know, put them on the shelf for 14 months and  
23 then you know expect them to be able to come back at  
24 full stream. They are just not going to be able to do  
25 that. And, you also have all the personnel you know

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

100

2 who have been working with the communities on these  
3 projects and they are really important and their  
4 skills and their experience is important and if you  
5 put that on the side you are going to lose a great  
6 deal of that and it is like a waste it's not just a  
7 waste of money, it is a waste of human, of human  
8 potential, it is human capital and that is, its just  
9 in every which way it is very unwise to do that and  
10 the COR Act will provide, you know if you give the \$7  
11 million you will be able to help people continue to  
12 recycle their waste, to learn new things, uhm to you  
13 know keep these community activities going and you  
14 know otherwise carting all of this stuff off to a  
15 landfill will cost more money.

16 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

17 CLAIRE FONTAINE: More money. So,  
18 anyway. It's a pennywise town foolish. Thank you  
19 and thank you to the committee for uhm this hearing.

20 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
21 hear from Oliver Wright, followed by Wylie Goodman,  
22 followed by Elsa Higby. Oliver.

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

24 OLIVER WRIGHT: Good afternoon Chair  
25 Reynoso and members of the Committee. My name is

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

101

2 Oliver Wright, I am representing Brooklyn Solid Waste  
3 Advisory Board. We are a volunteer assistance  
4 organization whose members are appointed by the  
5 Borough President to advise on waste matters and we  
6 are also a member of the Save Our Compost Coalition.  
7 Thanks for taking the time to hear our testimony and  
8 for the good work that you are all doing more  
9 broadly. So, first of all, we believe that the  
10 immediate focus should be on refunding and reopening  
11 the organics drop-off sites and NYC Compost Project  
12 Programs that were closed due to the Mayor's budget  
13 cuts in March. As has been stated, the \$7 million is  
14 a drop in the ocean of overall budget cuts in terms  
15 of savings and it leaves no city-funded residential  
16 organics programs. It also threatens to reverse  
17 years of hard work on this matter. And secondly, we  
18 support the COR Act and its passing as an important  
19 next step in improving waste equity and reducing  
20 environmental injustice. Uhm, with regards to Intro  
21 1942 we would echo Manhattan Borough President  
22 Brewer's statements about proximity to NYCHA  
23 developments and see that as an important part of  
24 environmental equity and we would also like to see  
25 as many of the drop-off sites as possible have

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

102

2 processing either on-site or nearby and for the  
3 finished compost to be made available to the  
4 community as a resource and this not only brings  
5 social benefits but also would reduce truck journeys  
6 particularly to transfer stations which are a key  
7 part of environmental justice as has been  
8 highlighted. We would like to see a rollout plan for  
9 the new sites in terms of staffing, resourcing and  
10 locations and also ideally a phased opening rather  
11 than lots of sites coming online in a year's time.  
12 Uhm Intro 1943 we understand the focus will be on  
13 textiles and while further access to textiles is good  
14 provided its complimentary to existing streams, we  
15 don't want electronics and hazardous waste to be  
16 forgotten about because these are key strings that  
17 are currently very much undeserved and residents are  
18 risking fines by illegal dumping given the lack of  
19 means of disposing of these items and that itself is  
20 a social injustice.

21 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

22 OLIVER WRIGHT: Thank you, almost done.

23 So, yeah in summary we would like to see the  
24 refunding of the compost sites that were closed the  
25 passing of the COR Act. Thank you very much.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

103

2 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Do any of the  
3 Council Members have questions for the previous  
4 panel? Please use the zoom raise hand function now.  
5 Chair Cabrera. One second.

6 CHAIR FERNANDO CABRERA: Thank you so  
7 much Nichole. Uhm at this moment I want to pass the  
8 baton to our new Co-Chair Council Member Justin  
9 Brannan who is going to be joining us. Uhm, today we  
10 are doing team work to help our Chair Reynoso making  
11 this hearing happen. So, thank you to all of the  
12 advocates who are here today, we will continue and  
13 with that I will pass it on um to my good friend  
14 Council Member Justin Brannan who is also a member of  
15 this committee.

16 CHAIRPERSON JUSTIN BRANNAN: Thank you,  
17 uhm thank you Chair Cabrera. Thank you. Uhm, okay  
18 committee Council, do we have questions from members  
19 I can't see.

20 NICHOLE BEAN: No, no Council Members have  
21 their hands raised.

22 CHAIRPERSON JUSTIN BRANNAN: Okay, we have  
23 another panel?

24 NICHOLE BEAN: Yes.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

104

2 CHAIRPERSON JUSTIN BRANNAN: Okay, let's  
3 go to the next panel then.

4 NICHOLE BEAN: Great. Next, we will hear  
5 from Wylie Goodman, followed by Elsa Higby, followed  
6 by Anna Deluca (SP?). Wylie.

7 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

8 WYLIE GOODMAN: Thank you Chairman  
9 Reynoso and Council Member Powers for your leadership  
10 and for the Sanitation and Solid Waste Management  
11 Committee group consideration of this testimony. My  
12 name is Wylie Goodman. I am the Chair of the Clean  
13 Solid Waste Advisory Board Organizing Committee a  
14 sister organization to Manhattan and Brooklyn SWAB. I  
15 am here today on behalf of our diverse multi-sector  
16 organization to advocate and restore funding to the  
17 New York City Compost Project, GrowNYC Organic and  
18 Textile Drop-off Sites and DSNY E-Waste Collection  
19 Events as well as passing the COR Act and ensure  
20 waste recovery equity. While we understand proposed  
21 cuts were made in response to the \$9 billion budget  
22 gap created by COVID-19, we believe these measures  
23 will exacerbate health and quality of life  
24 disparities, link to race and income that our group  
25 is committed to address and is thus the wrong



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

105

2 response at this urgent moment. However, taking the  
3 argument at its face, we challenge the physical  
4 rational for these cuts. Showing that reported  
5 savings will be offset by economic, environment and  
6 social costs and conclude that by contending that  
7 even if programs are spared the COR Act is still  
8 needed to reach all New Yorkers. The programs at risk  
9 cost \$7 million per year. Once cut; however, this  
10 money will not simply be recouped. That's because  
11 nearly 100 New Yorkers employed these programs will  
12 lose their jobs leading to unemployment benefits for  
13 furloughed workers, reduce tax revenue and economic  
14 multiplier losses to the businesses in which these  
15 workers and organizations purchase. There will also  
16 be added waste export cost. In 2019, the City spent  
17 \$41 million taking residential, school and  
18 governmental trash to landfills. That same year,  
19 these threatened programs collected 17,000 tons of  
20 textiles, 2,300 tons of organics and 1,056 tons of  
21 hazardous materials. Transporting these landfills  
22 will cost approximately \$3.34 million, reducing by  
23 nearly half of the \$7 million savings. We also look  
24 at, need to look at the capital costs. These include  
25 construction of the Staten Island Compost Facility to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

106

2 increase local and regional processing of food and  
3 yard waste and the Gowanus community composting  
4 facility able to accept 3 tons of material per week.  
5 This infrastructure left dormant will cost more to  
6 activate after a year away. Social and environmental  
7 benefits will also fall to the wayside with  
8 programmatic cuts.

9 SARGEANT OF ARMS: Time is expired.

10 WYLIE GOODMAN: Quickly among failure to  
11 distribute 500 tons of compost to 12,000 residents,  
12 loss of finish compost to 500 streets, lack of  
13 engagement of 7200 volunteers providing over 30,000  
14 hours of community service and losses not considered  
15 in the City's number crunching exercise. Rather than  
16 reserve to short-term panic selling of community  
17 composting, textile collections and E-Waste in light  
18 of COVID-19, we need to reinvest in the One NYC goal  
19 to become the most resilient, equitable and  
20 sustainable City in the world and send at least 90%  
21 less waste to the landfills by the year 2030. That  
22 means making organic collections mandatory as Council  
23 Speaker Johnson recommended before the pandemic. In  
24 truth, we seem to have no choice but adopt innovative  
25 strategies around waste, disposal of no longer wants

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

107

2 or recyclables, US cities no longer our \_\_\_\_\_. If we  
3 don't solve, reduce, reuse and recycle soon we are  
4 looking at far higher costs, added revenue which the  
5 City says it can no longer afford. Again, thank you  
6 for the Council and the committee for hearing our  
7 testimony. We miss Anthony uh Council Member Reynoso  
8 well and we want to thank the Council Members who  
9 have signed on Powers, Constantinides, Vallone, Van  
10 Bramer and just before this session uhm Donovan  
11 Richards, thank you.

12 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
13 hear from Elsa Higby, followed by Anna Deluco (SP?),  
14 followed by Pierre Simmons. Elsa.

15 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

16 ELSA HIGBY: Hi, just a point of protocol  
17 before my time starts most of us testifying today  
18 were not made aware of the two-minute time limit, so  
19 everyone has prepared three minutes. Uhm if my time  
20 could start again, I will start now. Thank you, Chair  
21 Reynoso, members of the Sanitation and Solid Waste  
22 Committee and members of the Council for hearing us  
23 today. The objective of legislation 1942 of the COR  
24 Act is the provision of equitable access to food  
25 scrap drop-offs. The objective of the Mayor is to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

108

2 drastically cut the City's budget. The two competing  
3 objectives of a recipe for meaningless implementation  
4 of legislation that has strong values but will not  
5 provide the equity that is inherent and mandatory  
6 curbside composting. If equity is the goal, let's not  
7 spend money on a new program that does not have  
8 infrastructure and no staff to plan its  
9 implementation. Let's put the funds back into the  
10 New York City Compost Project and GrowNYC so that we  
11 can maintain the infrastructure, skills and community  
12 networks already in place to build up COR if  
13 mandatory curbside is not possible. I am Elsa Higby,  
14 the project manager of the New York Compost Project  
15 hosted by Queens Botanical Garden. The New York  
16 City Compost Project is the foundation of the City's  
17 organics movement and it is a nationally recognized  
18 program. Our staff consists of three award recipients  
19 from the United States Composting Council. Our Master  
20 Composter Certificate Course has been copied many  
21 times across the United States and most Council  
22 Members have not heard of us because we are not a  
23 legal entity and do not seek direct relationships  
24 with Council Members. Yet, the Compost Project is  
25 arguably the most successful melding of Grassroots

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

109

2 initiatives and publically funded programming that  
3 the City has ever seen. All of the existing community  
4 hosted food scrap drop-offs were recruited from the  
5 networks of the seven New York City Compost Project  
6 sites. While 175 sites may not have been distributed,  
7 three per Council District, they represented an  
8 infrastructure that was built from the bottom up.  
9 Residents and community group stepping forward to  
10 participate in making New York City a better, greener  
11 place.

12 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

13 ELSA HIGBY: The New York City Compost  
14 Project is their own support. Over 70% of the staff  
15 at Compost Project have come out of volunteer  
16 opportunities created by the Compost Project and 50%  
17 of them are Master Composters. My colleagues have  
18 come up through a Green Drop Journey Program,  
19 Americore, Volunteerism and many of them have moved  
20 on to work for DSNY, micro-haulers, the Department of  
21 Environmental Protection, Parks, Randall's Island,  
22 Rucker's and the list goes on. If you haven't  
23 noticed, I am painting the picture of diversity,  
24 equity and inclusion. We have hired from New York  
25 City residents and from the diverse pool of people

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

110

2 who have come forward and said I want to be part of  
3 this. I want to make my City a better place.

4 Passing COR without re-instating the budgets, the New  
5 York City Compost Project and GrowNYC food scrap  
6 drop-off is trading on deep venerable community  
7 engagement for check the box equity that does little  
8 to broaden community awareness and empowerment. Real  
9 equity for food scrap collection is making curbside  
10 mandatory. The foundation for an equitable program  
11 that can success in the interim is maintaining New  
12 York City Compost Project's local outreach education  
13 and technical support allowing its staff to plan for  
14 explanation into the aspirations of COR when the  
15 budget allows for it. Thank you.

16 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. If any  
17 Council Members have questions for the previous  
18 panel, please use the zoom raise hand function now.  
19 Seeing no questions, we will move on to the next  
20 panel. First, we will hear from Anna Deluco (SP?),  
21 followed by Pierre Simmons, followed by Beverly  
22 Crosby. Anna.

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

24 ANNA DELUCO (SP?): (SPEAKING FOREIGN  
25 LANGUAGE). Yes, my name is Focesca (SP?) Maria and I

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

111

2 am a recycler and a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of  
3 Directors. I ask Anna Deluco (SP?) to translate my  
4 testimony. I support the COR Act because I live and  
5 work in North Brooklyn in the Council District  
6 represented by Antonio Reynoso. An area that suffers  
7 from environmental, economic and social injustice.  
8 The COR Act will ensure that we have a place to  
9 deposit our organics, electronics and any other  
10 material that needs to be recycled. It will help  
11 ensure that the responsibility that we all have to  
12 manage our waste and recycling is distributed  
13 throughout the City. The COR Act will improve the  
14 health of \_\_\_\_\_. Organic products attract pests. And  
15 electronic waste contains chemicals that are harmful  
16 to human's health. I support the COR Act in  
17 continuing to keep our neighborhoods clean. The  
18 community centers that would be created under this  
19 law would give work to more people and educate the  
20 community. I know this because it has happened  
21 already at Sure Weekend. The only non-profit  
22 recycling center in New York that has had success for  
23 12 years. Last year, more than 700 earned income  
24 through their work and more than 200 students from

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

112

2 kindergarten to college level visited the Sure  
3 Weekend.

4 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

5 ANNA DELUCO: Sure, Weekend is supporting  
6 the creating of an economy to achieve a better  
7 tomorrow. Leaving new generations with a cleaner and  
8 more sustainable plan, planet. In addition, Sure  
9 Weekend is training us, recyclers to develop our own  
10 initiative to open new centers. My husband and I are  
11 prepared and eager to take responsibility for  
12 managing a Sure Weekend extension which would be one  
13 of the new centers that COR proposes. Again, all of  
14 us support for the COR Act because it is step forward  
15 in doing the work we already do, cleaning our  
16 neighbors, neighborhoods, promoting health, creating  
17 green jobs, educating and empowering our community to  
18 solve urgent problems like the waste management as  
19 well as environmental, economic and social injustice  
20 we live in today. Thank you very much.

21 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
22 hear from Pierre Simmons, followed by Beverly Crosby,  
23 followed by Helena Whitaker. Pierre.

24 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

25 PIERRE SIMMONS: Go ahead.



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

113

2 BEVERLY CROSBY: Okay, we switched places,  
3 Pierre and I so uhm my name is Beverly Crosby and  
4 yes, we at Sure We Can fully support the COR Act  
5 thanks to Chairmen Powers and Reynoso for your  
6 proposal. We believe that the implementation of this  
7 legislation is doable. We at Sure We Can are doing  
8 it. In 2015, a group of graduate students at Carson's  
9 New School researched strategies of the  
10 implementation of the zero waste 2030 class and came  
11 to a clear and simple proposal to have 60 Sure We  
12 Cans which they describe as civic waste centers.  
13 Basically, what today has been proposed. After more  
14 than 10 years of doing a worthy job for the City of  
15 providing income for 100s of people who struggle to  
16 survive in an informal economy and also some green  
17 jobs empowering the community without taxpayer money.  
18 We have requested funds from you, the City Council to  
19 help us secure the sites in order to continue our  
20 work. Work that will help you implement this proposed  
21 legislation for the site for which we are now being  
22 threatened with eviction. Yeah. Thank you.  
23 (background talking).

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

114

2 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
3 hear from Pierre Simmons, followed by Helena  
4 Whitaker, followed by Marisa DeDominicis. Pierre.

5 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 PIERRE SIMMONS: Uhm, the answer we hear  
7 that you cannot help us because we did not have the  
8 required contracts of minimum of \$50,000 for the last  
9 two years, yes you are right we do not have the City  
10 contracts. The City has not offered and will not  
11 offer contracts for the main work that we do because  
12 the City made a contract to handle recycling before  
13 multi-million dollars mining Australian corporation  
14 for 20 years. So, we know that we cannot get any  
15 City contract for the job for at least the next 10  
16 years if ever. But in 2015, with funds from the  
17 Speakers Initiative Communities of Color, non-profit  
18 stabilization fund, thanks Mr. Speaker. We developed  
19 the Community Compost program in response to a great  
20 need of the City in order to create more green jobs,  
21 more resources for our community. Then we applied to  
22 the City for \$50,000 to keep running the program and  
23 because it was to self-sustaining, we got \$5,000.  
24 Thanks. From then on, we kept asking sanitation if  
25 we could apply for any program. They only, they

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

115

2 offer for compost, their answer, nothing is offered.

3 The City signed a contract for more than \$1.5 billion  
4 with SINS a foreign corporation and yet cannot give  
5 us \$1,300,000 to its constituents who are trying to  
6 find ways of living with dignity and self-reliance in  
7 the midst of a terribly unjust economic system and  
8 all because of requirements you made impossible to  
9 obtain. We were unable to meet under such  
10 conditions, the term, a need.

11 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 PIERRE SIMMONS: A knee brace to the neck  
13 takes on a different connotation with the same  
14 result. What we have seen these past days where so  
15 many voices are shouting on the streets is exactly  
16 what we feel today before you. We are not begging,  
17 we are just asking for what is just, but refusing to  
18 give us what belongs to us, city allocated funds  
19 which we badly need just once to continue doing self-  
20 sustaining and much needed environmental work to  
21 continue living and I want to thank you.

22 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Do any Council  
23 Members have question for this previous panel? If  
24 so, please use the zoom hand raise function now.  
25 Seeing no questions, we will move on to the next

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

116

2 panel. First, we will hear from Helena Whitaker  
3 followed by Marisa DeDominicis, followed by Jeff  
4 Twine. Helena.

5 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 HELENA WHITAKER: Hello, I, my name is  
7 Helena Whitaker, resident of Gowanus and I am  
8 submitting this testimony to ask you to be please  
9 allocate the budget fairly and help save composting  
10 and other social programs in New York City. As a  
11 citizen pruner, a garden committee member from our  
12 block association and one of the three stewards of  
13 our block I can attest that we benefit from using  
14 from the food cycle of the city compost, from  
15 collection to use of the final product. For now, a  
16 12-street block, we have 24 tree bags withheld to  
17 trees. The beds are beautifully planted and  
18 maintained by the residents of our block working as a  
19 group on weekends. Every spring we pick up the best  
20 compost and mulch from our sponsors, the Gowanus  
21 Canal Conservatives. Last year, we entered the  
22 Brooklyn Botanical Garden greenest block in Brooklyn  
23 competition for the first time and were semi-finalist  
24 on our first year of planting and beautifying our  
25 block. None of this would have been possible without

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

117

2 the City Compost and mulch processed here in our  
3 neighborhood by the GCC. Our neighborhood as a whole  
4 has been practicing curbside composting for years and  
5 has incorporated the practice as an interval part of  
6 the Sunday room almost as brushing your teeth.  
7 Rights to be actively participating on the curbside  
8 collection program and having so little garbage, I  
9 used to brag about it to friends who did not have the  
10 program available in their neighborhoods. We spent  
11 years being conditioned to compost and recycle and I  
12 is unthinkable to go back to placing all organic  
13 matter in the garbage. We are counting on your  
14 support to restore the \$7 million funds, implement  
15 the COR Act and continue funding for community  
16 composting programs and curbside composting now which  
17 will not only benefit directly on streets, on  
18 streets, tree beds and community gardens will create  
19 new green jobs and in the bigger picture will support  
20 broad efforts for environmental justice and climate  
21 change. It is not an option. It is crucial. Make  
22 curbside food scraps mandatory.

23 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
24 hear from Marisa DeDominicis, followed by Jeff Twine,  
25 followed by Adam Brugg (SP?). Marisa.

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

118

2 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Good morning, good  
4 afternoon Council for this opportunity to speak. I am  
5 Marisa DeDominicis, I am co-founder in (INAUDIBLE)  
6 destination for New York City food scraps.

7 NICHOLE BEAN: I'm sorry Marisa, we are  
8 having some technical issues hearing you, hold on one  
9 moment. (long pause). Do you want to try speaking  
10 again?

11 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Sure, is this  
12 better?

13 NICHOLE BEAN: Yes, that sounds better,  
14 thank you.

15 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Okay, sure. Good  
16 afternoon and thank you Council for this opportunity  
17 to speak. I'm Marisa Dedominicis, I am the ED and co-  
18 founder of Earth Matter. We are located on Governor's  
19 Island (INAUDIBLE) Legislation that would provide.

20 NICHOLE BEAN: I'm sorry Marisa the audio  
21 is, is jumbled again. I think someone from IT will  
22 reach out to you and we will go back to you after the  
23 next panelist if that is alright?

24 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Okay sounds good.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

119

2 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Uhm next we  
3 will hear from Jeff Twine.

4 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 JEFF TWINE: For over 40 years I've been  
6 President of Local Westside Recycling. I was also  
7 secretary of a committee that coordinated the  
8 activities of all voluntary recycling centers in New  
9 York.

10 NICHOLE BEAN: Jeff.

11 JEFF TWINE: Uhm I participated in  
12 meetings with DSNY when they were planning their  
13 recycling programs. I served as co-Chair of the  
14 Manhattan SWAB Presidential Committee during the  
15 1990s, so I am very familiar with how recycling has  
16 changed over the years. I want to emphasize that all  
17 of the materials collected by DSNY were first  
18 recycled by community groups and nonprofits. These  
19 groups built up a base of participated, educated the  
20 public and sparked interest that would later enable  
21 DSNY to take over the collection of recyclables on a  
22 larger scale. This is also the case now with food  
23 scrap composting. Eliminating private sector options  
24 would only make it more difficult for DSNY when they  
25 restart the program next June. Therefore, it is very

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

120

2 important to retain funding now for GrowNYC, Lower  
3 eastside Equality, Big Reuse and other members of the  
4 compost project. Organics recycling is in its  
5 infancy as recycling of metal and glass was in the  
6 1970s. People who have been recycling their food  
7 scraps through DSNY are committed and enthusiastic.  
8 They feel betrayed if they have no alternatives, if  
9 they were forced to throw food scraps in the garbage  
10 for an entire year. If they felt betrayed, they would  
11 be less likely to participate in future food scrap  
12 collection, less likely to interest neighbors to do  
13 the same. Thus, eludes much of the momentum that has  
14 been built up in the food scrap collection movement.  
15 Also continuing to fund the Compost Budget now will  
16 enable its members to maintain the infrastructure  
17 that had built up. The trucks, containers, drop-off  
18 locations, staffing, outreach and planning necessary  
19 for food scrap collection. Cutting this relatively  
20 tiny amount of support for the Compost Project would  
21 be a giant step backwards for the City. Longer term  
22 we need to revisit how DSNY how food scrap is...

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 JEFF TWINE: I believe that the only way  
25 to do that is by having mandatory recycling,



2 mandatory composting, through that we could eliminate  
3 a lot of the collection of garbage and save City  
4 money of late. We also would address a rat problem,  
5 a big health issue. Thank you very much for letting  
6 me testify, I will be submitting written testimony as  
7 well.

8                   NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
9 hear from Adam Brugg (SP?), followed by Michael  
10 Lempariello (SP?), followed by Domingo Morales.  
11 Adam.

12                   SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13                   ADAM BRUGG (SP?): Hi, thanks for the  
14 opportunity. I'm Adam Brugg (SP?). I run Wear Book  
15 Collections, a leading clothing and textile recycling  
16 company based out of Brooklyn. We've been the  
17 backbone of the New York City Green Market collection  
18 since 2008. We have grown the collections from  
19 market a week to 34 markets per week over that time  
20 span. What started out as a proof of concept has  
21 grown to be part of the fabric of Waste Management in  
22 NYC. Our company started by placing bins inside of  
23 residential building to make clothing recycling as  
24 easy as plastic, glass and paper. We have seen that  
25 business grow over 250 buildings citywide. We have

2 also partner with DOE Office of Sustainability and  
3 host clothing drives in over 100 schools. Wherever we  
4 believe we can create a convenient collection is how  
5 we seem to operate. There has been no better partner  
6 for us than GrowNYC who has led the way on each new  
7 waste management. The green markets have proven to  
8 be a perfect hub for waste collection. The  
9 collections have grown to around 1 million pounds  
10 annually from green markets alone. One might  
11 question how important textile collections are to the  
12 city? Textile and clothing make up 6% of the  
13 residential wasting. It is not a gigantic percentage  
14 but significant 200,000 tons a year. But there is  
15 more to the story which my 15 years' experience has  
16 taught me, clothing is the best gateway material to  
17 opening eyes for the value of our waste stream.  
18 People understand the value of clothing. They have a  
19 good sense of another that the clothing have when  
20 they are done with us through the years of donated  
21 clothing. People love to tell stories of the life  
22 they live in the clothing. As a waste manager,  
23 specifically of clothing I am well versed in how  
24 other materials are handled, I can see how waste  
25 management is very formulated and necessitates

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

123

2 efficient collections and document in fine values of  
3 the materials making them worth collecting.

4 Considering there is a cost for dumping our garage,

5 every pound the recyclists keep out of landfills and

6 in motion saves the City money. Once people learn

7 about the value, how clothing is valued is kept

8 through efficient distribution their minds can better

9 translate how materials like plastics, glass and

10 organics have better lives ahead of them as well when

11 they are finished and make them consider their

12 consumptive habits in general. We all seek a greener

13 NYC and textile recycling plays a key role in raising

14 awareness and education of the value of our waste

15 stream. I hope the Council can see this and

16 reinstitute zero waste program I fully support the

17 court act. Thank you.

18 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. If any Council

19 Members have questions at this time, they should use

20 the zoom raise hand function. Seeing no questions,

21 next, we will hear from Michael Lempariello (SP?)

22 followed by Sarah, followed by Christopher. Michael.

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 MICHAEL LEMPARIELLO (SP?): Good

25 afternoon all, my name is Constance Milichi Sky (SP?)

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

124

2 and I am an Assisting Ability Consultant at Two Trees  
3 Management who manages Domino Park in Williamsburg  
4 with New York City Parks. I am testifying on behalf  
5 of Two Trees Management and Domino Park today,  
6 specifically, Park Director Mike Lempariello (SP?).  
7 On June 1, Domino opened its internal organics  
8 processing operation to drop-offs around the public.  
9 The decision was made after discussions with local  
10 partners such as North Brooklyn Neighbors and our  
11 Council Members Reynoso and Levin who heard from many  
12 distraught constituents. To date, Domino has had  
13 five two-hour collection windows and each broke  
14 record set by the previous one. Last Thursday for  
15 example, we collected more in one day than in three  
16 previous days combined for a current total of 2000  
17 pounds from 400 community members. Though well  
18 utilized our mission to have been a privately funded  
19 operation is not enough and only highlighting the  
20 crisis that DSNY budget cuts created. I help sort  
21 through the beautiful resource community scraps  
22 brought to us. We have had repeat visitors from as  
23 far as Forrest Hills in Queens, the Bronx and  
24 Manhattan who have brought months' worth of scraps.  
25 We heard from folks who researched and found us to be

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

125

2 one of the three or so open facilities accepting  
3 scraps at no fee. I am as proud of this as I am  
4 heart-broken. New York City is a frontline community  
5 of a climate emergency, social and racial justice  
6 emergency and a public health emergency. We need to  
7 integrate the City's physical bottom line with  
8 environmental and social costs and benefits to  
9 reflect the true costs of an action on climate and  
10 racial justice. Organic recycling may cost us money  
11 now but it will cost us health and lives in the  
12 future. For individuals separating one's food scraps  
13 is one of the most practical at home climate action  
14 items. Let's empower our communities to do so with  
15 no less than mandatory curbside collection. Thank  
16 you.

17 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank, thank you. Next,  
18 we will hear from Domingo Morales. Domingo are you  
19 there?

20 DOMINGO MORALES: I'm here. Hello.

21 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you.

22 DOMINGO MORALES: Uh.

23 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 DOMINGO MORALES: My name is Domingo  
25 Morales, I'm 28 years old and I was born and raised

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

126

2 in New York City. I lived most of my life in New  
3 York City Housing Authority and thanks to the  
4 training that I received from the New York City  
5 Compost Project, I now run the Reho Compost Site  
6 which is the largest compost site in the whole  
7 country that processes its organics using 100%  
8 renewable energy. When I entered this field in 2015  
9 my life was changed. I was determined to become a  
10 compost expert but the transition was difficult.  
11 There weren't many people of color in the compost  
12 sector and when I applied for the job at the Brooklyn  
13 Botanic Garden, I didn't believe for one second, I  
14 was going to get the job because I lacked two main  
15 qualifications, a college degree and a driver's  
16 license. But thanks to the Reho Compost Site I had  
17 seven months of intense training and I knew more  
18 about the compost process than any other applicants.  
19 When I got the job, and the most exciting thing for  
20 me was the fact that I would be able to train other  
21 people just like and I have. I have trained hundreds  
22 of youth in underserved communities providing them  
23 with professional development that gives them a  
24 fighting chance at sustainable careers, increasing  
25 diversity in the sustainability world. I have been

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

127

2 helping to process residential food scraps in the  
3 most environmentally friendly way turning those food  
4 scraps into finished compost that have been used  
5 throughout the City to rebuild New York City soil.  
6 Farmers, gardeners, school gardens, parks,  
7 residential gardeners, street trees and local  
8 landscapers get our compost for free. GrowNYC and  
9 the New York City Compost Projects provide these  
10 services all year round. We educate the public about  
11 food and environmental injustice. We work with  
12 students and adults of all ages and all backgrounds  
13 cultivating a citywide composting culture. In 2013,  
14 you, City Council invested in the New York City  
15 Compost Project and you were able to change the lives  
16 of thousands of people. I'm asking that you reinstate  
17 the \$6.3 million for GrowNYC and the New York City  
18 Compost Project before the COR Act is passed. The COR  
19 Act is a step in the right direction because you know  
20 recognize that composting is essential. Composting  
21 reduces levels of methane being produced in  
22 landfills; it also reduces the amount of waste in  
23 landfills..

24 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

128

2 DOMINGO MORALES: Improving the quality  
3 of life for impoverished communities who reside near  
4 said landfills but we have already been doing this  
5 work. I ask that you fund and restore the existing  
6 programs and use the COR Act to expand these  
7 programs, giving us the ability to serve 100% of New  
8 York City. Thank you.

9 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
10 hear from Jodi Cologne, followed by Andrea Liske  
11 (SP?), followed by James Helton. Jodi.

12 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 ANDREA LISKE (SP?): I'm sorry, did you  
14 say Andrea Liske (SP?) or Jodi Cologne?

15 NICHOLE BEAN: Jodi Cologne.

16 JODI COLOGNE: Okay. Thank you, Chair  
17 Reynoso, Co-Chair Cabrera, Council Member Powers and  
18 members of the Sanitation Environment Committee and  
19 all the other Council Members, for your work on this.  
20 I am very excited that the COR Act has kept the  
21 composting conversation alive in the midst of COVID  
22 and all the budget cuts. I'm Jodi Cologne from the  
23 Bronx and I am grateful for the opportunity to offer  
24 my expertise and insight to you too. I was a bit  
25 surprised to hear that you are going forward with the



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

129

2 COR Act as is equally distributed drop-off sites  
3 don't shape up into social equity when it comes to  
4 composting and I am speaking from 23 years of  
5 experience out in the community, 18 of them as  
6 manager of the NYC Compost Project at the New York  
7 Botanical Garden, one of the seven teams funded by  
8 DSNY. It is community-based program serving nearly  
9 1000 organizations, agencies and community groups  
10 across the City that is social equity. Many have  
11 said make curbside mandatory like recycling. Make it  
12 mandatory so the building would participate. In the  
13 Bronx they say make drop-offs more than half mile  
14 away because anything else is too far away.  
15 Composting definitely needs to be more convenient no  
16 matter what your income is. In the Bronx there were  
17 three to seven drop-offs in most of the low-income  
18 districts. They accept only about 30 to 100 pound of  
19 food scraps despite being open for hours a week.  
20 Bronx sites in those neighborhoods don't waste food.  
21 They bring food scraps to places and people they care  
22 about, the community garden where they and their  
23 neighbors do grow food. It is the same in other  
24 boroughs. To be equitable they need hands on help,  
25 technical assistance and training to make compost to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

130

2 grow food and green their communities. I hope you  
3 will amend Intro 1942 to provide real equity. Have  
4 it mandate curbside composting within the next four  
5 years and until that happened let it definite core  
6 sites more broadly so they can be customized to the  
7 community's needs. Perhaps staffed or unstaffed food  
8 or yard waste drop-offs.

9 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 JODI COLOGNE: A neighborhood place where  
11 experts visit to provide the community with the  
12 knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to make  
13 and use compost locally. Oh wait, that's the mission  
14 of the NYC Compost Project. Restore some Fiscal Year  
15 21 Compost Project Funds and you have implemented  
16 some of COR, gain some of what we've lost to COVID.  
17 You've saved expertise and infrastructure and full-  
18 time green jobs with health, benefits and paid time  
19 off. You've preserved the connection to the people,  
20 places and partners that you need to start back up  
21 again in Fiscal Year 22 and then you also gained the  
22 time you need to craft COR to take it where you  
23 really want to go, mandatory curbside composting and  
24 custom wide community composting assistance in  
25 people's own neighborhoods. Thank you so much for

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

131

2 your time and for all of your work on these issues.

3 We appreciate that. We have been able to give voice  
4 to what people in the community are telling us.

5 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
6 hear from Andrea Liske (SP?), followed by James  
7 Seldon, followed by Andre Coburn. Andrea.

8 ANDREA LISKE (SP?): Good afternoon  
9 Council Members my name is Andrea Liske (SP?). I  
10 have worked with Earth Matter as part of the New York  
11 City Compost Project for six years. I have educated  
12 thousands of visitors to our Compost Learning Center  
13 on Governor's Island, doing workshops, tours, work  
14 days, technical assistance and during center open  
15 hours showing them the miraculous transformation of  
16 organic waste into nurturing compost to take care of  
17 our asylum plants illustrating the importance and  
18 benefits of composting for the environment showing  
19 them how to participate and teaching them how to  
20 compost themselves. As part of the New York City  
21 Compost Project hosted by Earth Matter I've managed  
22 the Waste and Preservation of many public zero waste  
23 events with thousands of visitors and volunteers  
24 enabling them to learn and participate in composting,  
25 recycling and environmental efficacy. I have been

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

132

2 let go as of April 6 because of the City budget cuts  
3 but this is not about me. This is about New York  
4 City continuing on to address the common crisis. It  
5 is about making the COR Act an equitable and sexist  
6 bill. Without education, outreach and technical  
7 support as part of the Bill it will not get there.  
8 It is through education and outreach that the word  
9 compost has become a household name and it is this  
10 wide outreach, education and technical assistance  
11 that will allow New Yorkers to participate. For some  
12 the best way to participate might be to drop off food  
13 scraps at a location. For others, it might be  
14 through the technical assistance in their community  
15 gardens and yet for others it will be through hands  
16 on experiences at compost sites. In House DSNY Staff  
17 will not be able to provide this in an adequate  
18 level. This work has to continue with offering New  
19 Yorkers to drop off food scraps. Please reinstate  
20 the funding for community composting and recycling  
21 outreach, make it part of COR and pass the COR Act.  
22 Thank you very much for your time.

23 NICHOLE BEAN: First I will go back to  
24 Marisa DeDominicis. Are you stil there Marisa?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

133

2 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Yes, I'm here. Can  
3 you hear me now?

4 NICHOLE BEAN: I can, yes.

5 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Woohoo. Okay.

6 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Good afternoon and  
8 thank you Council for this opportunity to speak. I'm  
9 Marisa DeDominicis. I am cofounder and ED of Earth  
10 Matter New York, a nonprofit on Governor's Island. I  
11 fully support this equitable COR Act legislation that  
12 provides composting and recycling opportunities for  
13 all New Yorkers. And thank you City Council Member  
14 Chin for your suggestion that Governor's Island be  
15 expanded as a destination for New York City food  
16 scraps. Earth Matter is ready, willing, able to work  
17 with all of our Community Compost Coalition Partners,  
18 the trust, local bids to increase our local  
19 processing capacity and achieve New York City goals.  
20 Our community composting coalition made up of GrowNYC  
21 zero waste programs and the seven compost projects  
22 has laid off 107 community compost staff people. The  
23 fundamental, educational scaffolding the New York  
24 City needs to ensure that the COR Act before us today  
25 is successfully implemented they are poof gone. I

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

134

2 urge you to restore the budget, to restore our staff  
3 and provide the infrastructure boots on the ground  
4 help needed for our residents to drop off and educate  
5 about the future compost drop-offs proposed, support  
6 system critical to help healing the environmental  
7 mess that we have made. In 1984, community  
8 organizers set up a 24/7 public food scrap drop off  
9 center. I don't know if you can see it, but there is  
10 Oscar the Grouch and there is compost bin underneath  
11 him. It was located on East 13th Street in Avenue B  
12 adjacent to our Green Thumb Garden. We use the  
13 compost on our block street trees and these Ash trees  
14 are thriving today. We used it on our garden soils  
15 where there was elevated lead levels and it created a  
16 healthier soil; however, my neighbor and garden  
17 partner's son, James at 3-years-old who played in the  
18 garden got severe lead poisoning which we believe  
19 contributes to his long-term health problems today.

20 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 ANDREA LISKE (SP?): No family should  
22 worry about poor soil damaging their child's health.  
23 We request that you restore our funding immediately  
24 to show that government works together with  
25 constituents and community organizations to solve one

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

135

2 of the City's biggest elephants in the room,  
3 irresponsible and environmentally devastating waste  
4 management practices. Thank you, authors of the COR  
5 Act, Council Members who support these bills and  
6 especially our Council Member Chin for providing a  
7 legislative interim solution until mandatory  
8 recycling is enacted. Wishing you all health and  
9 safety in this difficult time.

10           NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
11 hear from Jane Seldon followed by Andre Coburn  
12 followed by Jessica Caven. Jane.

13           SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14           JANE SELDON: First I would like to thank  
15 the committee for giving me the opportunity to  
16 testify today. My name is Jane Seldon and I am here  
17 representing 350 NYC an environmental activist  
18 organization focusing on local NYC climate issues.  
19 350 NYC has joined the Save Our Compost Coalition  
20 because we recognize the vital role of recycling of  
21 organic and nonorganic waste plays in confronting the  
22 climate crisis. 1/3 of the city's waste stream is  
23 composed of organic material. If composted it has  
24 the environmental benefit of sequestering carbon.  
25 However, if it enters landfill it produces methane, a

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

136

2 greenhouse gas 30 times more potent than carbon  
3 dioxide. Therefore, we urge the Mayor to restore  
4 funding for NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC. With  
5 the suspension of curbside recycling the services  
6 they provide will be the only way New Yorkers can  
7 divert organic waste from landfill. Shutting down  
8 these composting facilities also means even more  
9 waste will be trucked to waste transfer stations  
10 located primarily in low-income communities and  
11 communities of color where residents are already  
12 subjected to unhealthy levels of noise and air  
13 pollution. It is the same communities that have  
14 often now had access to recycling programs. The COR  
15 Act sponsored by Council Members Powers and Reynoso  
16 would address the inequity by mandating at least  
17 organic drop-off sites in every community district  
18 and would also include sites for recycling textiles  
19 which comprise 10% of the City's waste stream. These  
20 voluntary community-based programs are important stop  
21 gap measures that will keep organics recycling going  
22 during the current budget crisis. However,  
23 ultimately, we need to restore curbside pickup and  
24 make organics recycling mandatory in order to make it  
25 cost effective. 20 years ago, after 9/11 plastics



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

137

2 and glass recycling was suspended in the wake of  
3 another financial crisis and the City's recycling  
4 rate has never fully recovered. Today we no longer  
5 have the luxury of time in ensuring.

6 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 JANE SELDON: In ensuring the sustainable  
8 future. We can't afford to make the same mistake  
9 twice, thank you.

10 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. If any Council  
11 Members have questions for the previous panel please  
12 use the zoom hand raise function now. Next, we will  
13 hear from Andre Coburn followed by Jessica Tavon,  
14 followed by Ruth Assa. Andre.

15 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 ANDRE COBURN: Thank you members of the  
17 committee, Council Members Reynoso, Power, Cabrera,  
18 Brannan, Commissioner and Borough President. My  
19 name is Andre Coburn. I'm from South Queens. The  
20 child of hard-working Caribbean immigrants to this  
21 country, like my great grandmother who worked in  
22 cloth factories and hotels until she could open our  
23 family restaurant here in Queens. A place normally  
24 bustling in our community preCOVID. My great  
25 grandmother had a vegetable garden, a place to

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

138

2 lighten the burden of what to be bought and reminded  
3 everyone of the importance of giving back to the  
4 environment and what it could give to us. I am a  
5 passionate gardener. I am an explosive K-9 officer  
6 for DHS and I am a student of the New York City  
7 Compost Projects Master Composter Program. I am here  
8 today because although my job calls for me to risk my  
9 life to protect the public from threats today under  
10 threat are programs like the one I am part of that  
11 bring education and power and change to my community  
12 and greener space for so many diverse kids like my  
13 daughter and her friends and they are being cut.  
14 Programs like the Master Composter Course have  
15 changed my life and opened up community gardening  
16 relationships for my peers in the community. These  
17 programs give opportunities through GrowNYC and New  
18 York City Compost Project, Earth Matters, the Lower  
19 Eastside Ecology Center, the New York City Department  
20 of Sanitation and so many more help minorities in my  
21 neighborhood talk and form these bonds. We talk  
22 equality a lot today, people like myself asking to be  
23 seen. I ask that the Council Members that serve this  
24 City as well as the Mayor of New York please secure  
25 our future and see this need. We do not need another

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

139

2 bus depot in south Queens, we don't need more police  
3 task force buildings or airport parking lots, we need  
4 programs and facilities doing green work.

5 NICHOLE BEAN: I think you've  
6 accidentally muted yourself can we unmute Andre  
7 again.

8 ANDRE COBURN: Me, my community, our  
9 community. We need our children to be able to see  
10 community engagement with each household in my  
11 neighborhood contributing to curbside pickup. Please  
12 reinstate organics collections. We have great food in  
13 our community so we have green food scraps. Please  
14 support the COR Act by funding.

15 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 ANDRE COBURN: Infrastructure through  
17 1942. My great grandmother believed in teaching  
18 someone to grow and they will never go hungry.  
19 Although she passed away this year as many New  
20 Yorkers unfortunately have, her memory inspires me  
21 through this COVID crisis to prepare the earth for  
22 our children. Please reinstate New York Community  
23 Composting's Budget line the funds, the education  
24 site that help to teach New Yorkers like me and my  
25 friends and family and Community the processing sites

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

140

2 that give right back into our community with outreach  
3 and compost empower us to be stewards of the  
4 environment by continuing to fund community  
5 composting. We have the infrastructure already in  
6 place with New York City Compost Project, GrowNYC is  
7 necessary for the COR to be successful. Thank you  
8 again committee members for your time.

9 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
10 hear from Jessica Tovan, followed by Ruth Assa  
11 followed by Peter Caralini. Jessica.

12 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

13 JESSICA TOVAN: Hi, good afternoon can  
14 you hear me?

15 NICHOLE BEAN: Yes.

16 JESSICA TOVAN: Um so I would like to  
17 thank first off Council Member Cabrera, Council  
18 Member Brannan and all the other council members for  
19 the opportunity to speak today. My name is Jessica  
20 Tovan. I am a life-long resident of the Bronx. I was  
21 raised by Spanish speaking immigrant parents and back  
22 in 2014 I became very interested in this topic of  
23 waste management and I saw that in my community we  
24 were lacking in uhm just engaging in waste diversion.  
25 I was trained as a Master Composter with the NYC

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

141

2 Compost project and I have volunteered since then at  
3 community gardens, events, spreading awareness. I was  
4 also fortunate to be hired for a green industry job  
5 with the NYC Compost Project but my job position  
6 aside I am speaking up on behalf of myself and my  
7 neighbors. I am advocating for restoration of the \$7  
8 million community composting subsidy which funds the  
9 NYC Compost Project in every borough including the  
10 one that serves my neighborhood in Bedford Park.  
11 Composting provides ecological, social, psychological  
12 and spiritual benefits. Some of the panelists  
13 already spoke about the environmental benefits as far  
14 as metrics. I want to talk about a social  
15 perspective, about the community gardens and urban  
16 farmers of all ages and ethnic backgrounds that are  
17 already composting food scraps, teachers that attend  
18 compost project workshops and go on to create  
19 classroom worm beds to show other students that we  
20 can reduce waste indoors as well. These students are  
21 learning that the same compost can be used to feed  
22 the soil of indoor and outdoor plant. These  
23 composting education programs foster learning,  
24 creativity, self-reliance and more so they show our  
25 youth that they can dream and they are to improve our

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

142

2 neighborhoods. That their education is supported  
3 beyond the classrooms in our City's green spaces so  
4 we are already in the Bronx, the NYC Compost Project  
5 already engages with business improvement districts  
6 as the Jerome Gunhill Bed and Southern Boulevard Bed  
7 to spread awareness of composting and do street tree  
8 care. Homeowner and residents of apartment  
9 buildings in the Bronx such as Amalgamated House Coop  
10 of received composting equipment guidance, tricks and  
11 encouragement from knowledgeable composting staff,  
12 senior citizens get the opportunity to engage in the  
13 physical act of composting in a safe and accessible  
14 manner, they are able to contribute their labor,  
15 wisdom and cultural history to the communities.  
16 These are some of the things senior citizens that saw  
17 the communities burned but also participated in the  
18 rebuilding of our neighborhood and their stories have  
19 inspired me.

20 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

21 JESSICA TOVAN: And that I am here to  
22 speak up for them to preserve their years of hard  
23 work, to preserve all the advocates, preserve all of  
24 the education and awareness that has been done in the  
25 Bronx so that children in the Bronx who have already

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

143

2 seen their education and school life flip on them can  
3 at least have opportunities to learn about composting  
4 and learn how they can improve their environment.

5 Uhm, I guess to close it off we are faced with a  
6 bleak future and it requires us to reimagine and  
7 improve our waste management systems if we are to  
8 curb climate change and we owe it to the youth, we  
9 owe it to the senior citizens and all the residents  
10 of New York City and I would like to say thank you to  
11 the city council members for the opportunity to speak  
12 today.

13 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. Next, we will  
14 hear from Ruth Assa, followed by Peter Caroline  
15 followed by Nancy Romer. Ruth.

16 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

17 RUTH ASSA: I would like to just state a  
18 line from the book Picking up. Garbage is always. We  
19 will die. Civilization will crumble. Life as we know  
20 it will cease to exist. The trash will endure.  
21 That is why we need to compost not trash. Good  
22 afternoon to the Committee on Sanitation and Solid  
23 Waste Management. My name is Ruth Assa. I am an ICU  
24 Nurse and a Master Composter. As a Queens resident  
25 living in the year 2020, I think it is a shame that I

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

144

2 need to speak up about a \$7 million city budget cut  
3 to an initiative that addresses social, environmental  
4 justice and climate change impacts. On the other  
5 hand, I'm grateful for this opportunity to speak up  
6 at this committee hearing to reiterate as those have  
7 before me that the issue of organic waste removal is  
8 a priority need for New York City in the name of  
9 public health. Throughout the pandemic I continue to  
10 do my part of backyard composting and curbside pickup  
11 until it was unfortunately suspended. This past year  
12 I was also a fellow at Alliance of Nurses for Healthy  
13 Environments. In my work this past year I see a  
14 discrepancy that not all neighborhoods in the five  
15 boroughs are treated equally to have available brown  
16 bins for collection, neither are there available  
17 drop-off sites. This is a great time to analyze  
18 these gaps. This year in my fellowship program what  
19 I see in New York is a daunting list of inequities  
20 aside from COVID-19 issues of healthcare access there  
21 is issues of violence, the urban heat island effects,  
22 air pollution in southeast Queens and the issue of  
23 waste transfer stations primarily in neighborhoods of  
24 color. The main issue at the heart of all of these  
25 disparities was when I realized is the issue



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

145

2 irrespective of the borough. Social inequality and  
3 the lack of resources outreach work via zero waste  
4 initiatives is invaluable. Rather than back away  
5 from healthy initiatives, preventive actions such as  
6 reducing waste to landfills, we need to enhance  
7 organic waste efforts. I believe this can be done.

8 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

9 RUTH ASSA: I'm sorry. By reimplementing  
10 curbside collection and promoting invaluable outreach  
11 workers. Not only should the City strengthen its  
12 efforts on maintaining organic waste removal it  
13 should make it mandatory and widespread throughout  
14 the boroughs. It shouldn't stop their either, it  
15 should mandate that all essential places of business  
16 be held to a higher standard of waste segregation. I  
17 worked at LAJ Medical Center as an ICU Nurse for 9  
18 years and in my whole career have never experienced  
19 such chaotic times than what is currently going on  
20 with the COVID-19 pandemic. As a frontline  
21 healthcare worker, I understand the impact that  
22 climate change also has toward long-term public  
23 health impacts. It would be counterproductive to  
24 such invaluable programming and one that truly makes  
25 a difference in reducing greenhouse gases such as

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

146

2 methane. We need to be mindful as ever of our  
3 environment during these uncertain times. It is  
4 evident to me that behavior change is a reality. If  
5 people can abide by stay at home orders and socially  
6 isolate, organics waste collection should be made  
7 mandatory. I just want to very briefly say also that  
8 as an ICU nurse, as a holistic nurse and a fellow  
9 nurse the organic curbside collection and zero waste  
10 initiatives serves as an essential intervention to  
11 improving global and planetary health and I ask that  
12 the city restore funding to the Community Composting  
13 Zero Waste education programs and to implement the  
14 COR Act. This past year, I have tabled events  
15 voluntarily at my hospital thanks to Queens Botanical  
16 garden outreach workers and Big Reuse without their  
17 resources. Without their guidance, I would never  
18 have been able to do this and what I came across was  
19 a lot of people, a lot of employees who are  
20 interested in wanting to do more and wanting to help  
21 improve their environment. At the high school  
22 institute for health professions at Cambry Heights I  
23 helped to coordinate a composting educational session  
24 with the Queens Botanical Garden outreach worker and  
25 what high school students see from composting goes

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

147

2 beyond just collection, it is a method of reducing  
3 our carbon footprint and ties them to local food  
4 grown initiatives. Composting provides a public  
5 health need and education and your support would help  
6 me validate this past year's work that I've done  
7 voluntarily because I see it as crucial to the future  
8 of the youth who will inherit our City. Thank you.

9 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. If any Council  
10 Members have questions for the previous panel, please  
11 use the zoom raise hand function now. Next, we will  
12 hear from Peter Caralini followed by Nancy Wilmer.  
13 Peter.

14 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

15 PETER CARALINI: Hi everyone. Thank you  
16 for all of those who put this together. Uhm my name  
17 is Peter and like Jane so in that I am a member of  
18 the environmentalist activists from 350 NYC offering  
19 my testimony to why I think cutting the compost  
20 program is a huge mistake. For the past year I've  
21 been working for the Anjula company that keeps film  
22 and TV sets sustainable and reduces emissions. Part  
23 of my job involves redirecting waste and compost.  
24 From my time in this position I have seen the  
25 tremendous benefits of compost. Sustainability wise

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

148

2 compost is one of our best ways to curb emissions and  
3 reduce CO2 in the atmosphere. During my work in the  
4 past five years on less than 30 film and television  
5 sets, we've managed to take 440 metric tons of CO2  
6 out of the atmosphere from just composting alone.  
7 That is a fraction of what I think is achievable  
8 should millions of our residents have access to a  
9 composting program. On a citywide scale, the work  
10 that we could do to reduce emissions could be  
11 colossal. Financially those numbers help in the long  
12 run. Like Oliver Wright mentioned it reduces the  
13 cost of truck driving and the loads of waste to the  
14 landfill. They are also combating the climate crisis  
15 will accrue cost in the near future. Costs from  
16 rising sea levels and cost from migrants displaced by  
17 climate for example. A \$7 million budget cut  
18 wouldn't save that much more money as it is still  
19 less than 1% of NYECs annual \$98 million to \$1  
20 billion budget. Long story short, the cost for  
21 compost is microscopic compared to what will be  
22 required should the climate worsen drastically.  
23 Additionally, getting rid of the E-waste pick-ups is  
24 incredibly dangerous and electronics in landfill is  
25 environmentally hazardous beyond compare and has been

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

149

2 known to have horrible effects. So, having seen up  
3 close the benefits of composting I now ask that the  
4 funding for community compost be restored is a vital  
5 and money saving process to help our great city  
6 contribute immensely to the fight against climate  
7 change in a way that most New Yorkers can join in on  
8 and lastly as a 24-year-old terrified of the future  
9 climate crisis I am begging you to vote to take  
10 whatever measure you can to ensure your descendants  
11 have a livable world. Thank you for your time.

12 NICHOLE BEAN: Next we will hear from  
13 Nancy Wilmer, Nancy.

14 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins now.

15 NANCY WILMER: Okay, thank you uhm Peter  
16 thank you for reminding us of the climate crisis  
17 looming in front of us that is terrifying people who  
18 are aware and thank you to the City Council members  
19 who are advancing, composting and those who are  
20 advancing a \$1 billion cut in the New York Police  
21 Department. It is a good start to reimagine what  
22 equitable public safety looks like. Uhm, the  
23 People's Climate Movement of New York started in  
24 2014, developing that massive climate march and we  
25 are a coalition of a individuals and organizations

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

150

2 committed to mass mobilization for solutions to  
3 climate change. We recently sent the City Council a  
4 letter signed by 180 organizations on a green  
5 recovery and that is what is composting is about, it  
6 is part of the green recovery. With People's Climate  
7 Movement of New York stands behind saving the  
8 composting program that exists right now and ask the  
9 City Council of New York to expand that program to  
10 make it more self-supportive and ultimately less  
11 costly or to incur no cost to the City over time.  
12 Closing down the present composting program will be  
13 costly and starting it up will be even more costly.  
14 Composting costs can be covered by expanding the  
15 program making it more self-sustaining. The public  
16 outcry to this program can translate into broader  
17 education for New Yorkers and effective participation  
18 in the composting program now and in the future.  
19 Composting sequesters carbon in our atmosphere  
20 putting food scraps into landfill creates methane.  
21 It is a green house gas that is 86 times more potent  
22 and dangerous than carbon and creates respiratory  
23 illnesses in nearby communities. Because most waste  
24 transfer stations and landfill are in low income  
25 communities and communities of color, they will be

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

151

2 more affected again. People's Climate Movement asks  
3 that the City Council support the restoration of the  
4 \$7 million in the Mayor's budget to support the 170  
5 drop-off and community education sites as well as  
6 funding be restored to at least provide residents and  
7 communities with sites to drop off organic waste in  
8 the short-term and immediate future. We support  
9 Intro 1942 and 1943 the COR Act to have equitable  
10 organic and textile collection sites.

11 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

12 NANCY WILMER: In each community. What  
13 we really need is this mandatory collection for all  
14 New Yorkers. We need to slow down the devastating  
15 impact of climate change by supporting composting  
16 first in our communities and eventually mandatory  
17 curbside. Thank you very much.

18 NICHOLE BEAN: Thank you. If there is  
19 anyone who signed on to testify but hasn't been  
20 called yet can you please use the zoom raise hand  
21 function now. Are there any Council Members who have  
22 questions for this past panel, please use the zoom  
23 raise hand function now? Seeing no hands raised, I  
24 will turn this back over to Chair Brannan.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

152

2 CHAIRPERSON JUSTIN BRANNAN: Thank you  
3 Council, are we all done?

4 NICHOLE BEAN: It looks that way, yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON JUSTIN BRANNAN: Okay. This  
6 was great, I mean I am reminded of that familiar that  
7 familiar saying that you don't know what you got  
8 until its gone. I mean the amount of folks who have  
9 reached out to my office about losing composting was  
10 incredible. Uhm and it was by and large folks who  
11 live in smaller apartment buildings who don't have  
12 the space really but were really, really dedicated to  
13 composting. I mean when composting first came around  
14 and we saw the brown bins people thought they had  
15 been dropped from outer space, didn't understand what  
16 they were and they were sort of resistant to it. But  
17 they fell in love with it, t hey feel in love with  
18 food scraps. They fell in love with what this means.  
19 They fell in love with what this means for our  
20 environment. They fell in love for what it meant for  
21 the neighborhood uhm and it was really cool to see  
22 because people really kind of hated it when it first  
23 happened. Where the hell am, I going to put this  
24 bin? What the hell is this? The raccoons are going  
25 to go insane. There were all of these kinds of crazy



1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
2 AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

153

3 sort of unfounded fears about it but people fell in  
4 love with it and once they got to know what it meant  
5 you know for the larger environment. It was really  
6 cool to see. So, the outpouring of support that we  
7 got from folks when they heard that because of budget  
8 cuts that composting was going to be cut was pretty  
9 impressive. It was not what I was expecting. So, it  
10 is great to see my colleagues uhm Antonio, Council  
11 Member Reynoso and Councilman Powers are working on  
12 something that I fully support uhm to try to get this  
13 back. To try to salvage it somehow. To try to  
14 salvage composting. So, I was happy to step in to  
15 this hearing to help cheer it and to hear from folks  
16 on the ground. To hear folks who were given such an  
17 opportunity through these programs which is a piece  
18 that we don't think about a lot and that this was a  
19 program that was quietly very popular and that people  
20 are very upset that it is going to, its going to get  
21 cut and we need to do what we can to try to save it  
22 or put something together to keep it going through  
23 these harsh budget times. So, thank you all so much  
24 for testifying today. Your testimony is very  
25 meaningful to elected officials to hear what people  
are thinking across the City. We appreciate you

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

154

2 hanging in there and uhm with Counsel I can adjourn  
3 with that? Okay.

4 NICHOLE BEAN: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON JUSTIN BRANNAN: Thank you. L

6 And that that this hear is adjourned. (gavel  
7 pounding).

8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON SANITATION  
AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

155

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 29, 2020