

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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April 21, 2021
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing, Virtual Room 2

B E F O R E: Antonio Reynoso
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Antonio Reynoso
Justin L. Brannan
Fernando Cabrera
Margaret S. Chin
Oswald Feliz
James F. Gennaro
Kevin C. Riley
Ben Kallos
Helen K. Rosenthal
Chaim Deutsch

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

Edward Grayson
Commissioner
New York City Department of Sanitation

Bridget Anderson
Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and
Sustainability
New York City Department of Sanitation

Gregory Anderson
Deputy Commissioner for Policy and
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Melissa Iachan

Eric Goldstein

Tok Michelle Oyewole

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Rhonda Keyser

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Jay Peltz

Carlos Castell Croke

Christine Hegel

Phoebe Flaherty

Justin Green

Dior St. Hillaire

Jane Selden

Oliver Wright

Walter Dogan

Joel Berg

Matt Gove

Clare Mifflin

Kathy Nizarri

Anna Sacks

Christine Datz-Romero

Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: PC recording has
3 started.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Cloud recording under
5 way.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Backup is rolling.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you, and good
9 afternoon and welcome to today's remote New York City
10 Council hearing on the Committee on Sanitation and
11 Solid Waste Management. At this time would all
12 council members and council staff please turn on
13 their video. To minimize disruption, please place
14 electronic devices on vibrate or silent mode. If you
15 wish to submit testimony you may do so at
16 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that is
17 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you, Chair. We are
18 ready to begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I'm gonna start with
20 my gavel [gavel]. Ah, thank you for joining our
21 virtual hearing today before the council's Committee
22 on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I would
23 like to acknowledge my fellow members who are
24 present. I'd like to acknowledge, ah, Council
25 Members Brannan, Council Member Chin, Council Member

2 Gennaro, Council Member Kallos, Council Member Riley,
3 and Council Member Rosenthal. I will now turn it
4 over to the moderator, ah, and our committee counsel,
5 Nicole, um, to go over some procedural items.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
7 Reynoso. I'm Nicole Bean, counsel to the Committee
8 on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management and I'll be
9 moderating this hearing. Before we begin, I'd like
10 to remind everyone that you will be on mute until you
11 are called on to testify, at which point you will be
12 unmuted by the host. During this hearing I will be
13 calling on panelists to testify. Please listen for
14 your name to be called as I will periodically be
15 announcing who the next panelist will be. We will
16 first be hearing testimony from the administration,
17 followed by testimony from members of the public.
18 During this hearing, if council members would like to
19 ask questions of the administration or a specific
20 panelist please use the Zoom hand raise function and
21 I will call on you in order. We will be limiting
22 council member questions to five minutes, which
23 includes the time it takes to answer questions. For
24 members of the public we will be limiting speaking
25 time to three minutes in order to accommodate the

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2 [inaudible]. When you are called on to testify,
3 please state your name and the organization you
4 represent, if any, when it is your turn to speak.

5 Chair, would you like to give your opening statement
6 before we swear in the administration?

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yes, thank you.

8 Thank you, Nicole. Yes, so, good afternoon. I am
9 Council Member Antonio Reynoso. I'm the chair of the
10 Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.

11 Thank you for attending this oversight hearing on
12 getting to zero waste by 2030. We will also hear
13 Intro number 844, sponsored by Council Member Kallos,
14 to establish a goal of zero waste for New York City
15 by 2030; Intro number 2250, which I am the sponsor
16 of, to mandate reporting on the progress towards
17 sending zero waste to landfill; and Intro 2103,
18 sponsored by Council Member Rosenthal requiring
19 certain retail food stores to use the food

20 [inaudible] by porter. My entire tenure in the
21 council I have chaired this committee and spent the
22 last seven years dedicated to delivering
23 environmental justice, reducing our waste, and
24 increasing recycling. Waste management is not sexy,
25 but when done properly it delivers significant harm,

2 ah, it delivers, ah, significant harm reduction by,
3 ah, I'm sorry. It delivers significant harm by
4 burdening communities of color with pollutants, while
5 contributing to climate change, the impacts of which
6 could dwarf any crisis humanity has faced to day.
7 Early on when Mayor de Blasio announced his goal of
8 sending zero waste to landfill by 2030. It seemed we
9 had a ready partner in City Hall. However, following
10 the announcement of the goal it quickly became clear
11 that there was no plan in place to achieve it. We
12 have talked about the city's goals of getting to zero
13 waste by 2030 for years now, but have made very
14 little progress and there are real consequences to
15 this lack of progress. In New York City the same
16 three black and brown communities continue to process
17 a disproportionate amount of New York City's waste,
18 leading to high levels of respiratory illnesses and
19 dangerous truck traffic. The waste then gets ships
20 to other states, to landfills that incinerators,
21 landfills and incinerators that also often sit within
22 low-income communities of color and I can assure you
23 that they don't want our waste in their communities
24 any more than we want it in ours. As waste rots in
25 these landfills it creates emissions that contribute

3 to climate change. Plastics end up in our oceans and
4 destroy marine ecosystems. These impacts are just
5 the tip of the iceberg of how waste impacts our
6 environmental justice in the short and long term. We
7 simply cannot afford to stall any longer on making
8 meaningful progress towards achieving zero waste.

9 The mayor has created a significant credibility gap
10 with the public by declaring that the climate crisis,
11 ah, by declaring the climate crisis to be the

12 greatest calamity of our time and then immediately
13 cutting environmental initiatives as soon as we hit a
14 budget crunch. These programs are not amenities but
15 critical actions we must take if we have any hope of
16 salvaging our planet and delivering environmental

17 justice. I greatly appreciate the Department of
18 Sanitation and I know that they're working hard
19 towards reducing waste. But the city needs to invest
20 in recycling and reuse initiatives and ensure
21 everyone has access to dispose of their waste

22 properly. We need robust, culturally appropriate
23 education and outreach to ensure New Yorkers are
24 aware of and able to participate in these programs.

25 The legislation that we are hearing today will codify
the Zero By 30 goal, mandate progress reports, plans,

2 and analysis so that the city can work towards
3 actually increasing our diversion rates and
4 significantly reducing the amount of waste we send to
5 landfill. I look forward to hearing testimony from
6 DSNY, environmental justice advocates, and other
7 interested groups about their experience with these
8 initiatives so far and any advice that they have for
9 how the city could be doing more to reduce waste. We
10 have no time to waste. We need to take aggressive
11 action to move our waste system towards a sustainable
12 future. I will now turn it over to, ah, Council
13 Member Kallos, who would like to speak about his
14 bill, and then Council Member Rosenthal to speak
15 about her bill. Council Member Kallos.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you to
17 Sanitation Chair Reynoso and former Progressive
18 Caucus cochair. Ah, you have been fighting for our
19 environment, fighting zero waste, ah, for as long as
20 I can remember, even before you were in the City
21 Council. Ah, I want to thank you for hearing this
22 legislation to codify Zero By 30. Ah, last term I
23 tried to get it done then under a previous speaker.
24 I want to thank you and Speaker Corey Johnson for
25 prioritizing it this, ah, today on the eve of Earth

2 Day, ah, for codifying the, ah, Zero By 30 and, ah, I
3 know that, ah, when the mayor said it, it was really
4 good to hear because it meant we might have a willing
5 partner and we don't have to argue about the values.
6 The only issue is that by July 2020 the goal to
7 recycle 33% of department-managed solid waste and 25%
8 of curbside and containerized waste, and the city
9 fell short of that goal in 2020 with an actual
10 diversion rate of 21.6% of department-managed solid
11 waste and 18.5% of curbside and containerized waste.
12 Ah, so we, we are not, we're not moving in the right
13 direction, even before the pandemic. When the
14 pandemic hit, as you said, Chair, ah, it only made
15 things worse and we're seeing things going in the
16 wrong direction with a reduction for composting and
17 the types of reduction that we need to do. So, um,
18 I'm hoping that we can hear Introduction 844 and, ah,
19 get it passed, get it done, along with your
20 legislation, which I'm proud to cosponsor and, ah,
21 let's save the planet one, one piece of trash at a
22 time.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Council
24 Member Kallos. I'll now call on, ah, Council Member

2 Helen Rosenthal. Can we unmute Council Member
3 Rosenthal? Thank you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
5 much. Thank you for the unmute, and thank you,
6 Council Member Reynoso, chair of the Committee on
7 Sanitation, um, for being an exemplar chair, um, but
8 for also holding this incredibly important hearing,
9 um, today, and for including my legislation, and I
10 want to acknowledge my colleague, former Council
11 Member, ah, Rafael Espinal, who first introduced this
12 bill. Intro 2103 is intended to strengthen the food
13 donation system for larger food retail stores. My
14 bill is a meaningful step forward to reduce the
15 enormous amount of food we wastefully send to
16 landfills every day, and supporting the institutions
17 that feed hungry New Yorkers. We're living at a time
18 when food insecurity and hunger are rising and the
19 need for food banks and other resources continues to
20 increase. The human and environmental impacts of
21 trucking thousands of tons of edible food to
22 landfills across the region are unacceptable. So
23 instead of throwing out edible food we are finding
24 ways to get to hungry people, whether through
25 partnerships with nonprofits and community-based

2 organizations, or via the city's food portal.

3 Grocery stores that already have food donation plans

4 with organizations like City Harvest, for example,

5 would be exempt, and because we have no intention of

6 burdening our bodegas and small retailers there's a

7 minimum size requirement for stores covered by the

8 law. There is absolutely room for improvement in

9 this legislation and we welcome everyone's feedback

10 today. Thank you all, Chair Reynoso, for leading the

11 way as we chart a path for zero waste to landfills.

12 It shouldn't be as hard as people make it out to be.

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Council

14 Member Rosenthal for that. Now I think I'll pass it

15 over to our committee counsel to swear in our guests.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'll now

17 call on representatives of the administration to

18 testify at the hearing today for the Department of

19 Sanitation will be DSNY Commissioner Edward Grayson,

20 Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and Sustainability

21 Bridget Anderson, and Deputy Commissioner for Policy

22 and External Affairs Gregory Anderson. At this time

23 I'll administer the oath to each representative of

24 the administration. Do you affirm to tell the truth,

25 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before

2 this committee and to respond honestly to council
3 member questions? Commissioner Edward Grayson?

4 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner
6 Bridget Anderson?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you can say that
9 again, you didn't pop up on the screen.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANDERSON: I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And
12 Deputy Commissioner Gregory Anderson?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON: I
14 do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may
16 begin your testimony.

17 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Good afternoon,
18 Chair Reynoso and members of the City Council
19 Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.
20 I'm Edward Grayson, commissioner of the New York City
21 Department of Sanitation, and I am joined today by
22 Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner for Recycling
23 and Sustainability, and Gregory Anderson, Deputy
24 Commissioner for Policy and External Affairs. And we
25 thank you for the opportunity to testify this

2 afternoon on the important subject of zero waste and
3 the three bills under consideration today. It is
4 especially appropriate to recognize that tomorrow,
5 April 22, we celebrate the 51st anniversary of Earth
6 Day, a time when people, groups, and cities across
7 our nation and the globe come together to raise
8 awareness and inspire action on sustainability and
9 climate change. Achieving zero waste to landfills is
10 a key part of the city's efforts to fight climate
11 change and improve our environment. I also want to
12 take a moment here to reflect on where we were last
13 year at this time and where we are today. One year
14 ago we were facing some of the most painful budget
15 cuts in city history to ensure we could continue core
16 government operations and to devote resources to
17 essential safety, health, shelter, and food security
18 needs. As an unfortunate consequence, we were forced
19 to hit the pause button on other department programs,
20 including deep cuts to some of our beloved zero waste
21 programs. For me personally this was difficult
22 because I have spent much of my career over the last
23 decade leading the operational implementation of many
24 of these programs. Before the COVID-19 pandemic we
25 were making steady progress towards our goals,

2 increasing diversion rates and expanding access to a
3 growing suite of programs. Unfortunately, the
4 pandemic has halted some of that progress, and while
5 MGP and paper collection tonnage is up, refuse
6 tonnage is also up in most districts, and waste
7 generation patterns have shifted as a result of the
8 economic toll of the crisis. As the city continues
9 to recover we're likely to see a shift again in a new
10 and evolving waste generation pattern. DSNY has
11 never stopped planning for the future despite these
12 circumstances. The department is committed to moving
13 ahead to rebuild and reinvest in these important
14 programs and redouble our efforts to fight the
15 climate crisis. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
16 from solid waste involves reducing the volume of
17 waste generated, collecting food waste, the largest
18 source of waste-related GHG emissions, to make
19 compost energy, and increasing reuse and recycling of
20 the remain materials. To achieve zero waste the
21 department will implement large-scale changes to some
22 of its current programs, while implementing new,
23 improved, and expanded programs that target
24 recyclables, organics, textiles, electronics,
25 household items, and other non-recyclable waste.

3 Organic waste, including food scraps and yard waste,
4 is one of the most significant contributors of waste-
5 related greenhouse gas emissions, and is also the
6 largest category of New York's waste stream. This
7 material makes up one-third of the current waste
8 stream and represents a significant opportunity to
9 reduce emissions from landfill waste by diverting the
10 material through beneficial methods, including
11 composting and anaerobic digestion. And in the case
12 of specifically of food, to minimize it at its
13 source. The suspension of curbside composting last
14 year was very difficult for us. We invested a lot of
15 time and energy to that program over the last several
16 years and it is a very important part of achieving
17 our zero waste goals. I am pleased that the
18 preliminary FY22 budget includes 3.5 million dollars
19 for the New York City Compost Project to continue
20 operating food scrap drop-off sites across the city
21 and support community composting. These drop-off
22 sites have been extremely popular, breaking
23 participation records over the last several months.
24 We also offer resources to support those who are able
25 to compost at home, both through the department's
website and through the New York City Compost Project

3 partnerships. As the city continues to recover, we
4 look forward to the further restoring and expanding
5 our composting programs in the future. Another
6 example of DSNY's community-based approach to zero
7 waste is Donate NYC, which helps New Yorkers give
8 goods, find goods, and do good. By donating and
9 reusing goods instead of discarding them, New Yorkers
10 can greatly reduce waste, conservative energy and
11 resources, save money, and help provide jobs in human
12 services for New Yorkers in need. Donate NYC also
13 provides vital support for New York City's reuse
14 community, helping nonprofit organizations and local
15 reuse businesses increase and promote their reuse
16 efforts. The preliminary FY22 budget also provides
17 funding for the department to reinstate its special
18 and hazardous waste collection programs. We expect
19 that the special waste drop-off sites, ah, to reopen
20 in July, with the same schedule as in prior years,
21 which was every Saturday and the last Friday of each
22 month. We are also planning for safe disposal events
23 in each borough this fall. These drop-off events
24 provide for the collection of household hazardous
25 waste. We also thank the council for enacting
legislation to reduce or eliminate hard to dispose of

3 items. Imposing the 5-cent fee on paper carry-out
4 bags at stores has helped reduce single-use plastic
5 bag waste by encouraging New Yorkers to bring their
6 own reusable bags. We have also distributed more
7 than 1 million reusable bags to New Yorkers since
8 2016. And through February the paper bag fee has
9 generated more than \$840,000 in revenue for New York
10 City to support these efforts. The city's phone ban,
11 which took effect in January of 2019, prohibits
12 businesses from using, offering, or selling single-
13 use phone service products and loose fill package
14 material. It has also contributed to the reduction
15 in phone product waste. There is no denying that our
16 goal of sending zero waste to landfills by 2030 was
17 ambitious from the start. We set the bar very high.
18 And unfortunately some policy changes needed to make
19 this happen are not within the city's control. And
20 the state government also plays a key role in waste
21 policy. The department has actively engaged in
22 efforts at the state level to enact extended producer
23 responsibility programs for paper and plastic
24 packaging. EPR requires the manufacturers and
25 retailers of products to be financially responsible
for the recycling or disposal of their products. EPR

3 for packaging and paper has the potential to support
4 the funding of outreach for recycling infrastructure
5 investments and to reimbursement the city for a least
6 a portion of recycling costs. It has the potential
7 to reduce the city tax pay burden of recycling by
8 tens of millions of dollars. There are city and
9 state EPR programs already in place for electronics,
10 mercury thermostats, rechargeable batteries, and
11 refrigerant-containing products. And soon the state
12 will implement programs coverage paint and
13 pharmaceuticals. Sharing the cost of sustainable
14 materials management with the producers is an
15 important tool to help the city advance its
16 sustainability goals. Achieving zero waste and
17 shifting to a thriving circular economy depends on
18 high recycling rates. While recycling rates have
19 been improving, thanks in part to the department's
20 outreach efforts, the city still has a long way to
21 go. The best practices around the world have
22 demonstrated the success of a combination of
23 outreach, financial incentives, and infrastructure
24 that allows recycling to be simple, easy, and
25 convenient. Given our dense built environment,
diverse neighborhoods, and older building stock, this

3 change can be difficult, but we will continue to
4 challenge ourselves to improve and do better. I will
5 now turn to the three bills that we're here to
6 discuss today. The first bill, Intro 844, would
7 require the department to establish a goal of
8 diverting 100% of city-generated waste by 2030. If
9 the department determines that such a goal is not
10 feasible, despite best efforts, the department must
11 report such finding and make recommendations for
12 actions that it may undertake to achieve such
13 diversion within 180 days of such a determination.
14 The second bill, Intro 2250, would require the
15 department to submit to the mayor and council speaker
16 on or by July 1 of 2021 a plan to send zero waste to
17 landfills by 2030 with annual progress reports
18 beginning in July 2022. The last bill, Intro 2103,
19 would require large retail food stores to post
20 notices on the department's food donation portal of
21 excess food that they have available for donation at
22 least once per month, except for those stores that
23 already have agreements in place to donate their
24 excess food to not-for-profit organizations. Retail
25 stores would be required to arrange for
transportation of the excess food with reasonable

2 effort if requested by the recipient. I want to
3 thank Chair Reynoso and the sponsors of these bills
4 for introducing them and for convening this important
5 conversation today. The department supports the
6 spirit of all three bills. Nevertheless, I have
7 concerns about the timeline of the zero waste goal
8 and the reporting requirements set forth under Intros
9 844 and 2250. Our learnings from past efforts
10 combined with the setbacks that were caused by the
11 COVID-19 pandemic show that we need to take an all-in
12 approach to zero waste, including a combination of
13 new policies, programs, legislative reforms, and
14 partnerships with the private sector. While we will
15 work aggressively to make progress as quickly as
16 possible, the setbacks of COVID have made it
17 difficult to predict the timeline of achieving this
18 goal. As to the reporting requirements proposed from
19 Intro 2250, the department already publishes detailed
20 monthly diversion and disposal statistics for
21 curbside collection programs by district and borough.
22 Additionally, the department publishes annual reports
23 covering the department programs, including curbside
24 collection as well as non-curbside programs for e-
25 waste, textiles, used goods, and special waste.

2 These reports are required under various local laws
3 passed over several decades. They are posted on the
4 department's website and are publicly accessible.
5 The reporting requirements set forth in Intro 2250 as
6 written would be duplicative with the existing
7 required reports. We look forward to working and
8 having further discussions with the council to
9 discuss the changes to these reporting requirements
10 that achieve our mutual goals of transparency and
11 accessibility. As to Intro 2103, the department
12 created a food donation portal pursuant to Local Law
13 176 of 2017, which matches prospective donors and
14 recipients based on availability of excess food. We
15 are pleased that the council would like to expand the
16 use of this program and we support the goal in
17 encouraging food retailers to safely donate excess
18 food to organizations who help feed the hungry New
19 Yorkers. However, I would like to hear more from the
20 retail food industry and others who have joined us
21 today to better understand the impact of the
22 legislation on their daily operations, their current
23 food donation efforts, and their ability to meet the
24 bill's requirements. As the department works to
25 support the city's recovery for all, we remain

2 committed to our zero waste goals. We will continue
3 to work with communities, stakeholders, and this
4 council to develop, expand, and deepen our programs
5 in support of these goals. I thank you for your
6 time, and we are now happy to answer questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you,
8 Commissioner Grayson. Um, Commissioner, I, I know
9 that, ah, you believe, you know, achieving this goal
10 by 2030 will be a difficult one, um, and it was a
11 difficult one when we set the goal out over six years
12 ago, um, and I know that you also mentioned the fact
13 that a lot of these goals are difficult to accomplish
14 because some of them are state driven. Um, but I
15 want to focus on what the city could have or could do
16 that they're not doing, um, in an effort to show the
17 lack of, ah, priority that the mayor has set on a
18 goal that I think could use more as a catch phrase or
19 use more as, ah, ah, you know, a line that sounds
20 really good but never had the intention to actual see
21 it through. Um, and I want to be very clear that
22 this is not a reflection of the department's work and
23 more a lack of political will from the
24 administration. Ah, there is, has there been a study
25 done on, ah, the Save as You Throw program that would

2 reduce, ah, waste in the City of New York? Um, in
3 the work that we've seen, a significant portion of
4 our reduction efforts would come through a Save as
5 You Throw program. Has the administration moved
6 forward with any study or any work, um, related to
7 the Save as You Throw program?

8 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Thank you for your
9 question, Chair. Um, we have, ah, you know,
10 internally we have a dedicated team, ah, of people
11 who are staying with all of the trends and, ah, know
12 what other municipalities are doing, ah, weigh the
13 pros and cons of, ah, you know, Pay as You Throw or
14 Save as You Throw programs and we remain committed to
15 having that knowledge base and recognizing that that
16 is definitely a tool, ah, that has helped many
17 municipalities and, and many communities, ah, help,
18 you know, have a thriving recycling program. Um, I
19 will let our Deputy Commissioner Bridget Anderson,
20 ah, talk deeply about what we know of Pay as You
21 Throw and Save as You Throw programs, ah, and, and
22 what we've learned.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:
25 Thank you, Commissioner, and thank you, Chairman,

2 also for that question. Ah, we did have, um, a
3 million dollar budget in the very early days of the
4 [inaudible] program to, um, commission a study about
5 Save as You Throw and, ah, unfortunately that, um,
6 budget, ah, was removed and so we were not able to
7 commission a formal study. However, as Commissioner
8 Grayson mentioned, we do track and follow the trends
9 with Save as You Throw, Pay as You Throw programs.
10 Ah, New York City being the largest, densest city in
11 the country, majority renters, homeowners, folks are
12 renters at the high multi-unit, um, density of, of
13 the city it makes it difficult to understand exactly
14 what we, we understand that there will be benefits to
15 a Save as You Throw program. Most cities that do it
16 find that it, it does trigger incentives around, um,
17 ah, diversion. Um, however, to what extent those
18 figures will happen, ah, in New York City, in the
19 rental units, etcetera, we do not have a clear
20 understanding, but we do think that it is still an
21 important task to, um, continue to study Save as You
22 Throw programs and figure out exactly how it could
23 work in New York City. Um, I will also say that in
24 the commercial sector Pay as You Throw, Save as You
25 Throw, is also an important, um, part and with the

2 transition of the commercial waste sector to
3 commercial waste zones we do have an opportunity to
4 actual create a differential pricing for recycling,
5 composting, and trash, and so that will, we do
6 anticipate that that is actual gonna be a tool that
7 we'll be able to use in the commercial sector.

8 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Deputy

9 Commissioner, are, are you saying that, ah, in other
10 cities the Save as You Throw model has been a crucial
11 component of reducing waste, or Commissioner Grayson,
12 anyone? My, my point here is simple. I, I get that
13 you're doing research, but if I asked right now if we
14 passed legislation today that we would implement Save
15 as You Throw would the city be prepared to, to move
16 forward with that, or would they have to do a study,
17 um, before they can move forward with that, and why
18 not have the study already done so that we could be
19 in a position should we want to implement it, um, so
20 you're ready to go? Um, and, and, again, this would
21 be a very easy way to show us in the advocacy world,
22 um, in the activist world, that in the council world,
23 that you're serious about getting zero waste. But I
24 guess that, that should be and, and, and this is
25 tough for me to do, Bridget, because I know how

2 dedicated you are to achieving these goals, um, would
3 want to be very clear that I think a lot of this
4 comes from the top and it's, it's unfortunate that
5 we're going to grow the Department of Sanitation, who
6 is probably, ah, the most, ah, wanting or, or group
7 that wants to get this done, but, um, Save as You
8 Throw is a crucial component of getting to zero waste
9 and you guys have done very little, um, to move
10 forward with, ah, implementing it.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON: We
12 feel as though we are prepared. When, when we're
13 given the opportunity to commission a study we're
14 prepared to advance that study quickly given all of
15 the background research that we've been doing in
16 house. Um, a study is important for us to be able to
17 figure out what exactly the steps we need to take to
18 make it happen in New York City.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So why not put a
20 million dollars back into the budget to study Save as
21 You Throw? It's a very simple, straightforward
22 answer, question.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRIDGET ANDERSON:
24 It's something we're willing to work with you and the
25 administration to determine, ah, what's feasible.

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: OK. So that's one
3 thing that the city can control, that the state is
4 not involved in, that would speak volumes as to the
5 commitment from the Department of Sanitation and its
6 goals to achieve zero waste. Ah, the recycling of
7 textiles and electronic waste, also a program that
8 has been shut down by the City of New York during
9 COVID. Um, is there, ah, an attempt here to
10 reinstate that program in fully, ah, um, now at this
11 budget, Commissioner Grayson?

12 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Ah, as it stands,
13 thank you, Chair. Um, as it stands, ah, the
14 electronic waste program, ah, that we had been
15 implementing and, and was a very good program, ah, as
16 of this hearing, ah, there is no plan to reinstate
17 the program in FY22. Ah, and we continue to work,
18 you know, ah, with the administration, with OMB, on,
19 ah, seeing where restorations are going to come in on
20 some of our, ah, most cherished programs. Um, we
21 have, you know, we have been doing what we can and in
22 trying to promote, ah, you know, awareness, you know,
23 with digital messaging and trying to, to, you know,
24 let all the residents know what they still can do,
25 you know, to be a part of the recycling community, to

2 recycle textiles and do what they can with the, you
3 know, retailers that are required to take back. Ah,
4 it's not a convenient program on e-waste for New York
5 City residents. We recognize that. And, again, as
6 of this, this date the short answer is, ah, the e-
7 waste will not be coming back as of this hearing
8 date, and we're still working on, ah, finding out
9 exactly what happens on restorations, ah, moving
10 ahead.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So it's safe to say
12 that the city has quit, ah, on getting to zero waste
13 by 2030. Do we have another year that you want to
14 anticipate that we would get to zero waste? Is the
15 city committing to zero waste by 2040? Is it
16 committing to zero waste by 2050? I would like to
17 know what the new commitment from the city is.

18 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: I think that, that
19 is a more than fair question, sir. Um, and, ah, it
20 has been an absolute pleasure working with you in
21 your capacity as chair, ah, in my various roles over
22 the last few years with the department. And I can
23 tell you that the department and the city is
24 committed to zero waste and I think that putting a
25 new calendar date on it is going to be very

2 difficult, um, but I can assure you that, and you
3 said it in your opening commentary, ah, we are
4 committed to being all in on zero waste goals. I
5 find that putting a date on it, ah, is going to be
6 extremely difficult because of the confluence of
7 factors that are involved in getting there, um, and I
8 look forward to working a new timeline, ah, and
9 working on the timeline on what it could be with you
10 and your colleagues and the rest of the council.

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Ah, Commissioner
12 Grayson, would, would you have advised the mayor to
13 maybe not say that we would get to zero waste by
14 2030, um, ah, even without COVID? Ah, it seemed to
15 many of us in this, in this room that 2030 was
16 ambitious and just took a couple of years for us to
17 know that it was something that couldn't happen. Um,
18 why set a goal so aggressively and then not follow up
19 with a, a strong plan? I think, though, the issue we
20 have here is that there is no plan. If you want to
21 get something done, if you want to build a house you
22 have a blueprint, you have an architect, like you put
23 things together. This city just says something and,
24 ah, what, we assume that we're gonna achieve that
25 goal? Um, you know, because everything is gonna come

1
2 together on its own? We have to work towards a plan
3 and I just don't feel like right now even,
4 Commissioner Grayson, that you cannot outline a plan
5 that will get us there by 2050, um, just because I
6 don't think this administration has made it a
7 priority and your agency to actually achieve this
8 goal. I think it's, again, was just a, a line used
9 to look good, um, and achieve, and not necessarily
10 achieve the goal. Um, it, it speaks to the same
11 thing with Vision Zero, just there seems to be a
12 pattern in this administration of making commitments
13 and not being able to achieve them. And I think it
14 comes from a lack of planning. It's just, ah, and
15 DSNY I think is the most, one of the most
16 managerially efficient, ah, agencies that exist in
17 the City of New York and it not being able to put
18 forth a plan to help us achieve zero waste is a big
19 problem to me and to many communities that suffer
20 through environmental injustices and so forth that
21 this plan is supposed to help save. So, um, I guess
22 instead of, of a, of a question 'cause I want to move
23 on and allow for my colleagues and for all these
24 advocates to speak on this issue is just you forced
25 our hand, um, and, and not you, Commissioner Grayson.

2 I want keep saying making clear here. Ah, the
3 administration, Mayor Bill de Blasio, has forced the
4 City Council to have to pass legislation to make it
5 mandatory for you to achieve a goal that you set,
6 right, we're, we're making it mandatory that you
7 achieve a goal that you set, um, and also to have a
8 plan so that we can see that the, that the goal can
9 actually be achieved. That, that's what we're going
10 to be doing. We're gonna help you help yourself by
11 mandating that we meet a goal and that we have a plan
12 to achieve that goal, um, and, and it's an
13 unfortunate thing that we got here because everyone
14 in this room wanted to be an ally with this
15 administration in its attempt achieve zero waste by
16 2030, and it's just we've been, we've been met with
17 failure at every step, a lack of commitment, the
18 first cuts, the largest cuts, this administration
19 made during COVID [inaudible] Department of
20 Sanitation, there's just no commitment from the
21 administration when it comes to this department. And
22 I think, um, you know, everyone here is over it and
23 looking to do something more meaningful so we can
24 achieve this important goal. So, ah, Commissioner
25 Grayson, I want, ah, relieve you of having to answer

2 these questions because I really don't think that
3 this is a Department of Sanitation program. I think
4 this is an administration problem. Um, and, you
5 know, to see, you know, both Bridget and Gregory
6 Anderson here, um, you know, it pains me 'cause I
7 know what the values of this administration and its,
8 ah, and its folks, its policy folks. So I want to
9 move forward and allow for my colleagues. I have
10 more questions, a lot more questions that I will ask
11 after the next, after my colleagues go, but I want to
12 make sure that they have time here, um, to ask
13 questions, and I want to start with, um, Council
14 Member Helen Rosenthal, who is the sponsor of one of
15 the bills. Ah, Council Member Rosenthal, and I'm so
16 sorry, this will be the last time I'm calling on
17 folks, ah, the committee counsel will handle that,
18 um, in order of when you raised your hand. Um, so,
19 ah, Council Member Rosenthal first and then we'll
20 move from here.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
22 much, Chair Reynoso. Um, and thank you to Sanitation
23 for being here in testifying. Um, I'm anxious to
24 actually turn it back over to Council Member Reynoso
25 because he's asking, ah, you know, all the questions

2 that, um, and, and [inaudible] all of the work that
3 Sanitation needs to do in order for us to get to zero
4 waste, which is a common goal, and, you know, he,
5 his, I share his frustration. I'm actually, you
6 know, I, ah, appreciated your comments, Commissioner,
7 about wanting to hear from the, ah, Grocery Store
8 Association Industry, um, before commenting on, um,
9 my bill, um, and I eagerly await hearing from them as
10 well. Um, but it sounds like should, should that not
11 be a problem there is a mechanism that's already, you
12 know, on the Sanitation website that could be used.
13 Is that right?

14 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Ah, that is
15 correct.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great, great,
17 great. And that would be if everyone is kosher with
18 this bill that would be easy enough to do or, or then
19 we would an implementation problem, like?

20 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: I think, ah, a
21 fair enough question. I think that, ah, while we
22 have a mechanism, I think that we would have to just
23 do some smoothing. Um, and our main goal is to make
24 sure, ah, as we work with you and we see the
25 progression of the bill and hear the commentary, just

2 make sure that what the, while we completely support
3 the spirit, as I said, of the bill and making sure
4 that we can do what we can to eliminate food waste
5 and make sure the people who, ah, you know, are in
6 jeopardy of being food insecure and how this, it's a
7 perfect marriage. There's a, there is also some
8 local level already deals. We just want to make sure
9 that none of the good work that's already going on
10 gets impacted. Ah, and then we want to definitely be
11 part of a partnership that helps it be the best it
12 possibly can then [inaudible].

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah. You
14 know, interestingly, um, it's happening organically
15 in my community. There's a local church, um, that
16 has connected with local restaurants and grocery
17 stores that are delivering food to the church at the
18 end of the day, um, and it's been incredibly, um,
19 helpful to, to those who need the food, um, and, and
20 that's what gives me confidence that I think we're
21 going to be able to get there. Um, ah, on a
22 different matter, and then, Chair, I promise to pass
23 it back to you and the other colleagues. Ah, could I
24 learn a little bit more about digesters, which you
25 spoke about. Oh, I don't know if you spoke about it

2 or, or one of your colleagues, um, mentioned it in,
3 in our earlier press conference. But, um, you know,
4 I had been asking Sanitation, ah, the first year of
5 my being in this position to get an anaerobic
6 digester put in right next to the Sanitation's site
7 on the, on West 59th Street, um, and the Hudson
8 River. It seemed like it was place that where there
9 was an anchor, um, sort of in it, it wouldn't be so
10 hard to, um, get one there. But there seemed to be
11 hurdles that were insurmountable, um, to do something
12 like that. Do those hurdles still exist or is this
13 something where I can request of the commissioner
14 that we invest in a digester right at that location?

15 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Ah, great
16 question. But like anything, ah, having to do with
17 construction and infrastructure, ah, yes, hurdles are
18 still in place. Um, what I definitely look forward
19 to in [inaudible] committee to working with you and
20 council on, ah, what would be one of the [inaudible]
21 that the department definitely needs to, ah, look at
22 moving forward, ah, as part of comprehensive zero
23 waste plan is, is anaerobic digesters and placement
24 of them and partnership agreements and, and an
25 increased network where we can do this good work

2 with, with waste and digestion, into the being a
3 mechanism of how we handle it. So currently it is
4 not something we could just flip a switch with. Ah,
5 so it's, I don't know that all of the same hurdles,
6 but there are still hurdles and we definitely look
7 forward to continuing that conversation with you and
8 continuing on a global scale with this committee on
9 what will be the long-term plan, ah, that definitely
10 includes [inaudible] digestion.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Do you have,
12 um, a map? Is there a map somewhere of where the
13 digesters are now?

14 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Ah, we can provide
15 offline the, the digester spots, um, that are
16 available, um, and what would, you know, 'cause not
17 all of it is, is massive scale, but we can definitely
18 provide you with some information on where some of
19 those operations are, if you would like to see
20 something.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: A hundred
22 percent. And so let's start with that, which would
23 be the easy thing, and, ah, committee counsel could
24 share that information with me when it comes over
25 from Sanitation. And if you could send that over

2 right away. So don't let my next question slow that
3 down. But I would like to see whether or not there
4 would be an opportunity for one at the West 59th
5 Street site, which just seems opportune, um, right
6 now.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:

8 Yeah, and, and Council Member, I would add, um, I, I
9 remember, ah, the meeting that we had with the former
10 commissioner where you, where you raised that as an
11 idea. Um, it was, it was quite a few years ago, um,
12 and, ah, you know, I think we did, we did look at it.
13 Obviously that facility is a critical part of our
14 paper collection and recycling, ah, network. It
15 handles all the paper for the island of Manhattan,
16 which is a pretty significant, um, amount of paper.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [inaudible]

18 change any of that.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:

20 Yeah, so I think, you know, at the time we did look
21 at it and there, there are some pretty severe space
22 constraints. Um, we're happy to take another look at
23 it. But I, I do think that you are, um, raising an
24 important issue, which is that, um, you know, as we
25 look to reestablish, um, our organics program and

2 grow our organics program, currently food scrap drop-
3 off sites, um, in the future, um, hopefully sometime
4 in the next, ah, next few weeks, you know,
5 reestablishing curbside collection of organics we
6 really do need to have a processing infrastructure in
7 place, um, to handle that. We're making upgrades
8 right now at our Staten Island compost facility to be
9 able to handle more, ah, food waste in addition to
10 yard waste at that location. We're always in
11 conversation with DEP about expanding the amount of
12 food waste we handle it there, anaerobic digestion
13 facilities currently at Newtown Creek. We're looking
14 at some other anaerobic digesters, ah, for potential,
15 um, co-digestion. So I think, I think definitely a
16 lot of opportunity with that.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [inaudible]
18 narcissistic. I just wanted to talk about my
19 district.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON: I
21 understand.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Um, but I'm
23 glad you're doing things across the city. I guess
24 I'm gonna push one more time and say I know there's
25 no space on the structure that there is now, and

2 that's not the question I was asking. The question
3 I'm asking is as money has flowed in for Hudson River
4 Park that's there, there's a private developer that
5 is developing a new funky, you know, something,
6 something off the, um, sort of on the West Side, ah,
7 Pier. Why can't, why isn't, can't we be, what is the
8 cost of setting something on a pier right next to the
9 current site utilizing the amazing, um, transit, um,
10 path that already exists for the paper recycling, um,
11 in a location that is not, you know, so heavily used
12 by residents right now? You know, I'm really, I hope
13 that the, the administration will think harder about
14 what is getting the way of building one there. And
15 if it's money, you know, that's, that's why we have
16 council members' ability to put money in the budget,
17 you know, and I've never gotten a request from
18 Sanitation to move forward on that, unfortunately.
19 All right. Thank you. Thank you so much, Chair
20 Reynoso, and, and thank you to Sanitation, really
21 appreciate your hard work.

22 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Council
23 Member Rosenthal. I think the sergeants are gonna
24 take it away now.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Um, actually next
3 we'll hear from Council Member Chin.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Beautiful, thank
5 you. Council Member Chin.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I think she's on
8 mute.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I tried to
10 unmute. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Um, thank
11 you, Commissioner Grayson, it's great to see you
12 again. Um, in your testimony we're happy that some
13 money has been restored, um, but as you know it's not
14 enough. We're gonna have to fight for more. Um, in
15 your testimony you talked about, um, the reusable
16 bag, that the plastic bag, um, ban that came into
17 effect finally and you said that there was \$840,000
18 that was generated. Do you have a time period for
19 that, for the paper bag, ah, fee?

20 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: I believe that is,
21 ah, from implementation to, um, I'll just double
22 check. Ah, Deputy Commissioner Greg Anderson, what
23 was the date of that figure, ah?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREGORY ANDERSON:
25 Yes, so that's, that was implemented last March, ah,

2 2020. That's through the, ah, the receipts in
3 February. So we get, ah, quarterly payments from the
4 state, ah, Department of Tax and Finance. So that's
5 through the last quarterly payment, payment we
6 received in February. Um, and those funds, the
7 \$840,000 that we received so far, um, are exclusively
8 dedicated under state law for purchasing and
9 distributing reusable bags. Um, so that's part of
10 the effort that we've had since 2016 in very close
11 partnership with, um, with you and with other council
12 members, ah, Council Member Chin, to distribute more
13 than a million reusable bag, ah, to New Yorkers all
14 across the city as part of our efforts to reduce
15 plastic bag waste.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, that's,
17 that's good. I'm, I'm just so glad to hear that it
18 is being implemented and we're getting the resource,
19 ah, getting the money back to, to give out more
20 reusable bags, 'cause a lot of people are carrying
21 around the orange bag that we've been, ah, giving
22 out. We will, ah, continue to do that. Um, in terms
23 of composting, right, um, earlier at the, the press
24 conference, I was just talking about how do we, I
25 mean, we started taking, my family, we started taking

2 advantage of the composting site at the farmer's
3 market right down here in Bowling Green. Um, and
4 it's great. I mean, it's really cut down on the
5 garbage that I put out, ah, in my building. But down
6 in lower Manhattan, I mean, every, ah, garbage day I
7 see piles and piles of garbage. It really just
8 breaks my heart to how much garbage that we generate.
9 So we do need to really promote, um, this composting,
10 'cause if everybody does their part I'm pretty sure
11 we can cut, you know, cut the garbage down to more
12 than half. And I just, you know, see it myself. Ah,
13 so I think that we still need to really continue to
14 do the outreach and education and to, um, provide
15 more sites, 'cause right now we're, we're, I think
16 the city and the council were funding the farmer's
17 market, but so what is the department's, ah, plan on
18 promoting or really creating more drop-off sites
19 within different neighborhoods? And what about also,
20 ah, thinking about working, ah, with some of the
21 local business improvement district? Like, for
22 example, in my district I got quite a few of them,
23 and if we can get them to work with us, um, that can
24 definitely help, ah, increase, ah, the composting,
25 ah, organic waste program.

2 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Ah, Councilwoman,
3 thank you for the question. Um, so we've been doing,
4 ah, a lot, ah, and we have, ah, currently 121 food
5 scrap drop-off sites, you know, operating in the city
6 with the partnerships, um, and, you know, that's in,
7 you know, like 46, ah, community boards have
8 someplace that you can bring something all the time.
9 There's only 13 community boards that, that don't
10 have, ah, you know, a year-round drop-off and we're,
11 we're always looking to increase those partnerships.
12 We're definitely looking for, ah, for an increase in
13 that program and definitely looking to, to, you know,
14 have more partners join us. We, we campaign. We
15 definitely continue to support, ah, you know, thanks
16 to the Grow NYC network and those partnerships, and
17 there are a lot of individuals who want to take part
18 in it and we look for these, and it's a great idea
19 and we look forward to working with you, ah, in
20 finding partners for, you know, your district and
21 elsewhere in Manhattan. Um, and we think it would be
22 a great idea. Ah, we're continuing to look and
23 we've, our, our drop-off sites have been doing an, an
24 incredible amount of, ah, great work, ah, throughout,
25 particularly throughout this past 13 months of the

2 pandemic and, ah, we definitely look for expansion
3 there.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, the only way
5 you could do that is with more funding. Because the,
6 the 3.5 million that was reinstated definitely is not
7 enough, right? So we got it. We gotta fight
8 [inaudible].

9 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: For, for all the
10 programs funding is always great. So [laughs].

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah. And I also I
12 think, my, my last point with that is, ah, with, ah,
13 the federal stimulus money coming down, ah, are you
14 in position with, ah, your deputy mayor to fight for
15 your share? Ah, I mean, we will advocate with you
16 because if the money is coming down from the federal
17 government this is a great opportunity to expand some
18 of the, the programs in different community, um, to
19 really help us reach the zero waste goals, you know,
20 goal. So I don't want you, ah, not fight for the
21 share.

22 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Understood and,
23 ah, and, and fully, I appreciate the sentiment of
24 that. Ah, yes, we are still working with the
25 administration and OMB and, ah, on what restoration

2 funds are coming and, ah, we're, we're optimistic
3 that, that things will get better. We just are, are
4 fine tuning and, and continuing the work in the
5 discussions, ah, on what's coming back and how, how
6 we can move forward.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: That's good. I'm
8 glad that you're optimistic. So we will work with
9 you, ah, on that. Thank you, Chair.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Reynoso, there
11 are no more council member questions at the moment.
12 Do you have more questions?

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Um, I do. One
14 second, I'm sorry. I want to acknowledge that we've
15 also been joined by Council Member Deutsch and
16 Council Member Cabrera as well. Actually, um, I am,
17 I'm OK right now. While I have my concerns, again, I
18 just want to reiterate that I have my concerns over
19 the original commitment of the administration related
20 to its goals to get to zero waste. Um, I really feel
21 like the council's hand is being forced here to, ah,
22 incentivize the city to move forward, um, with
23 getting to zero waste. Um, unfortunately it's gonna
24 end up falling on the hands of our next mayor, who I
25 hope is more committed to achieving these goals than

2 our current one. Um, so I'm, I'm OK with my
3 questions to the administration. I'm just hoping
4 that the administration could stay on or that DSNY
5 could stay on to hear the testimony from these
6 advocates that all want to be allies with the
7 Department of Sanitation in achieving its goal to get
8 to zero waste. What you're going to see is everyone
9 wanting to be a partner, not wanting, not folks that
10 want to attack the Department of Sanitation. Um, so
11 I'm hoping that you can stay and, and meet and hear
12 your allies. Um, I want to move forward with our
13 panelists. Um, but thank you again, Commissioner
14 Grayson, ah, Deputy Commissioner Gregory Anderson,
15 and Deputy Commissioner, ah, Bridget Anderson. Thank
16 you so much for your time.

17 COMMISSIONER GRAYSON: Thank you, Chair.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
19 now turn to public testimony. I'd like to remind
20 everyone that unlike our typical council hearings we
21 will be calling on individuals one by one to testify.
22 As I stated earlier, each panelist will be given
23 three minutes to speak. Please begin once the
24 sergeant has started the timer and given the cue to
25 being. Council members who have questions for a

2 particular panelist should use the raise hand
3 function in Zoom and I will call on you after the
4 panelist has completed their testimony. We'd like to
5 begin testimony with, ah, Melissa Iachan. After
6 Melissa I will be calling on Eric Goldstein, and then
7 Tok Michelle Oyewole. Melissa?

8 MELISSA IACHAN: Thank you so much,
9 Counsel, and, um, I think this is the, the first for
10 me in all my years of testifying going first, so I'm,
11 I'm grateful to be here. Good. My name is Melissa
12 Iachan. I am senior supervising counsel in the
13 environmental justice program at New York Lawyers for
14 the Public Interest. I am here representing NYLPI to
15 underscore the importance of ensuring that our city
16 diverts waste from landfills and incinerators,
17 supports and expands diversion programs, including
18 education and outreach, and continues to make the
19 necessary investments in a robust organics program to
20 begin to make a dent in the damage that our massive
21 waste stream has done to environmental justice
22 communities, but also to our planet as a whole. We
23 are here today, a day before Earth Day, to shed light
24 not only on the tragic failures of our city
25 government to take even modest steps forward towards

2 putting us on a path towards zero waste, but to
3 highlight and demonstrate how uncomplicated the
4 practical policies could make a critical difference
5 to combatting climate change. As a preliminary
6 matter, we want to express our strong support for the
7 bills being heard today, which together provide
8 concrete goals and ways the city can begin to right
9 the wrongs of us collectively being responsible for
10 sending an average of 3.2 million tons of waste to
11 landfill and incineration from the residential side
12 each year, plus another 2.5 million tons to landfill
13 from the commercial side. There are many feasible
14 and achievable policies the city can begin to
15 implement immediately. In particular, the three Rs
16 should always guide our waste policy - reduce, reuse,
17 recycle. Reduce - practical waste reduction policies
18 will be detailed in my written testimony, but they
19 include Intro 2103, the food donation bill. This
20 important legislation advances the goal of ensuring
21 that edible excess food is donated. This is
22 particularly important given how COVID eliminated,
23 how prevalent food insecurity is in our city. We
24 absolutely must do everything we can to ensure that
25 edible food does not end up in landfill. Save as You

2 Throw - we urge the council and the administration to
3 consider implementing financial incentives for
4 residences, including multi-family homes who
5 consistently source separated recyclables to get
6 financial benefits. These policies have been proven
7 to reduce landfill-bound waste significantly in other
8 jurisdictions and should be utilized in New York
9 City. Skip the stuff - the council has not yet heard
10 another important piece of waste reduction
11 legislation, Intro 1775-B, and we urge the council to
12 calendar a hearing on this bill, which represents
13 another step towards reducing our reliance on single-
14 use plastics. Plastics straw upon request. This
15 legislation mandating that plastic straws be provided
16 only upon request has been languishing in the council
17 for more than three years. We are aware that the
18 bill has been amended to address concerns
19 expressed by the disability rights community and urge
20 the council to pass the amended legislation in short
21 order. Reuse incentives - as many have already said
22 various local and state governments have found that
23 funding community repair and reuse programs,
24 including broad educational services, does result in
25 behavior change. We urge the city to follow suit.

2 Organics recycling and community composting - we know
3 that organic waste releases one of the most potent
4 greenhouse gasses...

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 MELISSA IACHAN: Did somebody have
7 something to say? Sorry. In high, and high, um,
8 concentrations. We also know that organic waste
9 moving through truck-intensive transfer stations in
10 EJ communities represents more than one-third of the
11 waste stream and contributes to the worst nuisance
12 conditions for residents who live near these
13 facilities. It is incumbent on our city to ensure
14 that organic waste is taken out of our landfill and
15 incinerator bound waste and instead used
16 beneficially. Universal curbside organics recycling
17 service. We at NYLPI cannot underscore how important
18 it is to ensure that the city offer universal
19 curbside organic waste recycling services to every
20 resident in every borough. We join with our fellow
21 advocates lamenting the suspension of the voluntary
22 brown band program, but we also know that the program
23 is flawed. Rather than offering a voluntary
24 piecemeal service only to certain residents, many who
25 don't even know if they are eligible, the city must

2 immediately begin plans to phase in mandatory
3 universal curbside compost collection with the goal
4 of requiring every household to source separate
5 organic waste for collection.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 MELISSA IACHAN: [inaudible] throughout
8 all boroughs. We support the [inaudible] and we
9 further urge the committee to advance legislation
10 that begins to address the issue of equitable access
11 to city land for compost processing for small scale
12 organizations who do this work to engage, educate,
13 and green their neighborhoods. Protect and preserve
14 composting processing sites. In the same vein the
15 city must ensure that these essential organizations
16 who have been filling the gap of collecting and
17 processing organic waste so that it can continue to
18 be diverted from landfill that they be protected,
19 supported and sustained. The current predicaments of
20 imminent eviction by the city faced by at least three
21 of the primary nonprofit compost project partners is
22 unnecessary and downright wrong. The city should
23 ensure that these and other community scale compost
24 organizations who are beloved by their neighbors and
25 communities always have a place in which to operate,

2 educate, and enrich, especially on and within New
3 York City parks land. We should also expand
4 municipal organics processing via Renewable Riker's.
5 According to the Renewable Riker's law passed by the
6 city, as soon as the summer the city can begin to
7 transfer land and property from DOC to be used by
8 DSNY to establish and expand organic waste processing
9 capacity on the island with a goal of a large
10 processing operation that can one day receive source-
11 separated organic waste via barge, eliminating more
12 of the need for truck, polluting truck transport.
13 Finally, the commercial waste stream ensure that the
14 commercial waste zone system implements ambitious,
15 ah, diversion requirements and accessibility. For
16 far too long the commercial waste industry has gotten
17 away with failing to keep recyclables separated by
18 [inaudible] separate and comingling source-separated
19 organic waste with other trash, sending all of this
20 to landfill. For most of the last decade our
21 Transform Don't Trash New York City Coalition has
22 pointed out how harmful this lack of compliance with,
23 accountability for, and enforcement of diversion
24 requirements in the commercial sanitation sector are.
25 Finally, we have an opportunity to fix this and we

3 must ensure that the discounts for recycling and
4 organic services that were suggested in Local Law 199
5 are a part of every aspect of this new system. We
6 also need to ensure that the, the waste haulers and
7 facilities who comingle recyclables are penalized,
8 not just the generators. Finally, we all know that
9 the city's recycling rate lags behind almost every
10 major cities in the United States at 18%. At this
11 point in time with recycling having been firmly
12 ensconced in our city's psyche for decades this is
13 unexcusable. We must do more to ensure that
14 recycling enforcement is increased to adequately,
15 adequately penalize those who despite the prevalence
16 and ease of separating recyclables continue to lag
17 behind and we must not stop funding and supporting
18 education regarding recycling for all ages and all
19 boroughs in our city. We also know that recycling
20 creates more than twice the jobs than traditional
21 landfill bound waste in sanitation. As though
22 environmental and climate justice weren't good reason
23 enough to ensure expansion of recycling and the
24 creation of good green jobs will hopefully seal the
25 deal. We are so grateful for the leadership of Chair
Reynoso in continuing to highlight the serious issues

3 surrounding our city's waste processing and
4 management. We look forward to continuing our work
5 together with him and the administration to ensure
6 that no time is wasted in setting us on an efficient
7 and effective path to real waste reduction. Thank
8 you very much.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next we
10 will hear from Eric Goldstein, followed by Tok
11 Michelle Oyewole, and Erik Bottcher. Eric Goldstein.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

13 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Thank you. Thank you,
14 Nicole. And thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and thank
15 you to Council Members Chin and Rosenthal, who have
16 been such great friends of the environment and solid
17 waste for so many years. We, we've been here for a
18 long time on these issues and unfortunately we're not
19 making the progress that we should be. Thanks for
20 holding this hearing to focus on the mayor's, ah,
21 achieving the ambitious goal of sending zero waste to
22 landfills. Unfortunately, the administration's
23 performance hasn't matched the rhetoric. I'm gonna
24 summarize my written statement, but basically without
25 dramatic change the chances of achieving anything
close to zero waste to landfills by 2030 are slim

2 indeed. And failing to achieve this milestone would
3 be more than a blot on Mayor de Blasio's
4 environmental legacy. It would representing a
5 government-wide failure to achieve fundamental
6 environmental policy reform and for New Yorkers the
7 result will be more air pollution, increased global
8 warming emissions, and continuing environmental
9 injustice. Although the government's intent to move
10 in the direction of zero waste goes back to 1989, it
11 was Mayor de Blasio who formally adopted the zero
12 waste to landfills goal six years ago when he
13 released his first sustainability plan. This was
14 done with a lot of great fanfare and the plan
15 included eight specific initiatives that would be
16 implemented to move the city closer to zero waste.
17 Unfortunately, except for progress on commercial
18 waste reform and action, ah, to reduce plastic carry-
19 out bags the city's movement on these initiatives has
20 been limited indeed. The number one zero waste
21 initiative to expand organics collection, both its
22 curbside and convenient drop-offs locations, ah, has
23 simply not achieved its objectives. Initiative four
24 called for enhancing recycling collections in, among
25 other places, New York City Housing Authority

2 developments. No progress there. Initiative number
3 five called to make all schools zero waste schools.
4 Once again, setbacks in that area. Initiative six,
5 expansion of textile and electronic waste recycling,
6 setback again. Same story for Save as You Throw
7 collections. So we haven't made a lot of progress
8 and we've been moving in the wrong direction. Here
9 are four critical steps the council should take in
10 2021 to get the city back on track. First, the
11 council should enact a new law establishing a
12 mandatory universal program for separated collection
13 of food scraps and yard waste from every city
14 household. This would deal with the single-largest
15 source of global warming emissions from the waste
16 sector and divert these wastes from landfills to
17 efficient composting and anaerobic digestion and
18 community composting sites. The 3.5 million dollars
19 for community composting that was just mentioned by
20 the commissioner is wholly inadequate. The patient
21 is still in intensive care and barely alive. Funding
22 needs to be restored to pre-COVID levels for expanded
23 community composting as a short-term measure. Ah,
24 the Renewable Riker's piece...

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: ...involving posting
3 needs to be moving forward as well and we'll never
4 achieve our goals if we don't, ah, advance a
5 universal composting collection. Second, the council
6 needs to provide sufficient funding to ensure full
7 implementation of its landmark commercial waste zone
8 legislation. This was an historic advance, but it
9 isn't self-enforcing and the department needs funds
10 both for its own resources and a consultant to make
11 sure that this program advances and is implemented in
12 2021. Third, the council should restore funding for
13 recycling and composting collections at every public
14 school and at NYCHA developments around the city.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: The city's school-age
17 youngsters must learn how and why to recycle and
18 compost so that these activities become second nature
19 and NYCHA residents are entitled to be working with
20 their own, ah, organizations, their own nonprofits to
21 have economic incentives and engage their neighbors
22 to reverse the city's dismal record on solid waste
23 performance at NYCHA products, ah, projects.
24 Finally, the council should advance legislation that
25 would make plastic straws, plastic utensils, and

2 other throwaway plastics available only on request.
3 Finally, Intro 844, a small step in the right
4 direction, we recommend the bill be amended to set
5 goals of 50% waste reduction sent to landfills and
6 incinerators by 2030 and 90% reduction to both of
7 those facilities by 2035. Intro 2103 would require
8 food service establishments to post additional
9 information on food donation portals. We love that
10 and strongly support that bill. Intro 2250, DSNY
11 would report on the city's progress in sending zero
12 waste to landfills. We support this bill. But
13 without the kinds of actions outlined above and more
14 set forth in our written testimony, those progress
15 reports will be very short indeed. But we still got
16 time. We're counting on our champions in the City
17 Council to move a comprehensive set of legislation
18 forward in the current year, and we thank you for
19 your attention.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next will
21 be Tok Michelle Oyewole, followed by Erik Bottcher,
22 followed by Rebecca Sabnam.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

24 TOK MICHELLE OYEWOLE: Good afternoon and
25 thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is

3 Dr. Tok Michelle Oyewole and I am testifying on
4 behalf of the New York City Environmental Justice
5 Alliance. I will submit my full written testimony
6 and make abridged comments today. Since 1991 NYCEJA
7 has led efforts for comprehensive policy reforms to
8 address the disproportionate burden of New York's
9 solid waste system on a handful of environmental
10 justice communities in the city, with impacts
11 greatest in a few low-income communities and
12 communities of color, where truck-dependent transfer
13 stations are clustered. Outside of New York City we
14 rely on a system of truck-based export where our
15 waste is to sent to landfills and incinerators in
16 neighboring and distant communities, from as near by
17 as predominantly black and brown New York, New
18 Jersey, to as far away as Virginia and South
19 Carolina. Burning large amounts of trash in
20 combustion chambers, some incinerators use heat to
21 produce electricity, similar to the technology of a
22 coal plant. Although there is an attempt to claim
23 that waste energy is sustainable, it is one of the
24 most emission-intensive ways to generate energy and
25 the health, environmental, and climate impacts are
manifold, including up to 2.5 more, times more

2 greenhouse gases than coal-based energy production,
3 concentrating toxins that lead to cancers and other
4 health effects, um, from elements such as dioxins,
5 lead, and cadmium in the ash that is then transferred
6 to landfills or hazardous material sites. It is
7 clear that our system of over-reliance on excess
8 waste generation and export facilities is not only
9 unsustainable, but polluting and poisoning
10 environmental justice communities and our planet.

11 Today I need to name our country's violence against
12 black, brown, and indigenous communities that it was
13 by design of the US named certain bodies exploitable
14 and killable and certain neighborhoods both in and
15 out of New York City as sacrifice zones for waste and
16 material disposal. Zero waste needs to be a
17 comprehensive strategy that is broadened to include
18 zero waste incineration. Again, it is an act of
19 violence to continue to redeem these predominantly
20 black and brown communities as our city sacrifice
21 zones all while exacerbated meeting the climate
22 change crisis and it is shameful that the
23 administration seemed to quietly, um, seems quietly
24 committed to perpetuating, perpetuating reliance on
25 this dirty waste management strategy and I would urge

2 the administration to change its tune. Relatedly we
3 need to zero in on what we mean when we're talking
4 about zero waste. It's important to aim for
5 solutions high on the zero waste hierarchy, including
6 redesigning our systems and reduction of waste before
7 it is generated and disposed with bold changes such
8 as universal use of reusables and refillables and
9 restaurants, retail, shipping, personal care, and
10 household products. Recycling is good, but this
11 still requires energy to transform materials that are
12 generated and discarded after limited use. So it
13 should be a lower priority than waste avoidance to
14 begin with. Of note, recycling facilities also can
15 lead [inaudible] communities of color. We hope to
16 see textile origination labeling and stocking
17 reduction to prevent extractive including practices
18 and avoid the 6% of waste from New York City that is
19 textiles. We hope to see donation programs for food
20 and other goods requiring partnerships with
21 retailers. We urge for comprehensive demand planning
22 tools and technologies to avoid waste in...

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 TOK MICHELLE OYEWOLE: Um, we are happy
25 to talk about diversion from other niche streams as

2 well. Critically, we are a large proponent of
3 community composting as co-organizers of the Save Our
4 Compost Coalition. And we need to see compost
5 processing sites expanded locally. Happy to see the
6 City Council include this in their budget response.
7 And we hope this will undergird a universal organic
8 collection program when implemented. Of note, Big
9 Reuse and Lower East Side Ecology Center still do not
10 have guaranteed homes after they were threatened with
11 eviction by New York City Parks Department. And now
12 the status of Earth Matters is at risk as well. With
13 regards to the facilities in the city we hope to see,
14 um, waste facilities in southeast Queens brought up
15 to code for being grand, grandfathered into an M1
16 mixed residential zone.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 TOK MICHELLE OYEWOLE: And an upholding
19 of capacity reductions under waste equity, um, rather
20 than increases which would be antithetical to zero
21 waste goals. And we encourage fair share
22 distribution by borough. We and the transplant,
23 Transform Don't Trash Coalition are glad to see the
24 City Council's budget response affirm and ask for
25 staffing for oversight of commercial waste zones.

2 Again, I'll submit expanded written testimony, and
3 thank you for the opportunity to raise these urgent
4 concerns.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
6 we'll hear from Erik Bottcher, followed by Rebecca
7 Sabnam, followed by Hudson Athas.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

9 ERIK BOTTCHEER: Good afternoon, Chairman
10 Reynoso and members of the Sanitation Committee. I'm
11 Erik Bottcher, a resident of Council District 3.
12 It's great to see so many friends here today. I want
13 to commend Council Members Rosenthal, Kallos, and
14 Reynoso for these important bills. I believe that
15 organic waste recycling is the future of sanitation.
16 In Council District 3 we work with DSNY to win
17 curbside pickup at large buildings like Westbeth,
18 Penn South, and Manhattan Plaza, and created new
19 drop-off locations throughout the district. But
20 we've got to mandate universal composting services
21 for all residents, residents, and businesses like
22 California did last year. This can divert more than
23 a million tons of garbage from landfills each year,
24 reducing carbon emissions, preventing rodent
25 infestation and improving sidewalk conditions. To

2 keep truck emissions down and create green jobs we
3 need to locally process as much of the food and yard
4 and plant waste as possible. Local residents should
5 be trained and hired to process composting on site,
6 and create rooftop urban farms, also addressing food
7 insecurity. Additionally, the city should use
8 organic waste to generate clean energy locally, which
9 could potentially be done at New Green Energy Hub on
10 Riker's Island. We've got to do better at recovering
11 edible unsold food. Ah, this will reduce greenhouse
12 gas emissions and also help New Yorkers experiencing
13 food insecurity. 68% of all the food that is
14 discarded in New York City is still edible. So I
15 urge you to pass Helen Rosenthal's Intro 2103 that
16 will reduce food waste by creating a communication
17 portal for food donors and recipients. We've got to
18 phase out single-use plastics that are killing our
19 marine ecosystems and littering our neighborhoods.
20 The Department of Sanitation collected roughly 36
21 million pounds of single-use plastics from homes
22 across the five boroughs in 2017 and an estimated
23 tens of millions of pounds from commercial
24 establishments. I support piloting reusable water
25 bottle refilling stations at fire hydrants, like they

2 did successfully in Montreal. Even at the most
3 progressive meetings in New York, when you walk in
4 the door of the room there's a pallet of bottled
5 water. We can't continue with this. So much more
6 needs to be done to achieve zero waste to landfill
7 and incineration by 2030. But New Yorkers are an
8 unstoppable force when we set our sights on a goal.
9 I look forward to making this a reality, and thank
10 you so much for your time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
12 we'll hear from Rebecca Sabnam, followed by Hudson
13 Athas, followed by Rhonda Keyser.

14 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Erik, it's nice to
15 see you on the other side of the, of the screen for
16 once. I just wanted to give you a shout-out. It's
17 nice to see you, brother.

18 ERIK BOTTCHEER: You, too.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

20 REBECCA SABNAM: Ah, good afternoon. My
21 name is Rebecca Sabnam. I am a 12th-grader in
22 Brooklyn Latin and I wanted to urge, um, all of you
23 to please support the bills that we've talked about
24 previously. So in my school, um, which we don't have
25 any like type of like zero waste managing system, I

2 tried to implement, um, a zero waste system with the
3 help of the Cafeteria Culture, um, to get my school
4 to be zero waste. But I did not expect it to be as
5 hard as it was. One of the first problems that we
6 actually came across was the fact that our school was
7 not on the route for organics collection and there
8 was no way for, that we would be able to become zero
9 waste if one of the big components of the system,
10 which is, you know, composting wasn't there. And it
11 shouldn't be that hard for us and we're not the only
12 school that's like this. The budget cuts, ah, to
13 composting did not help that, either. This kind of
14 environmental justice is not accessible. My school
15 and other black and brown communities, um, like it
16 deserve more access to organics collection and not
17 only do these communities not have access to the same
18 organics collection, but they also have to bear the
19 burden of landfills and incineration in their own
20 back yard. So you can't sacrifice the lives of black
21 and brown communities but not also give them the
22 resources to organics collection. This environmental
23 racism must be addressed if we want to even attempt
24 to meet the zero waste by 2030 goal. And which is
25 why I urge you to support the, the bills. Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
3 we'll hear from Hudson Athas, followed by Rhonda
4 Keyser, followed by Debby Lee Cohen.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I keep interrupting
6 in between the, the conversations. I just want to
7 give a huge shout-out to Rebecca and the amazing work
8 she does as a young person, ah, being front and
9 center on these issues insistentlly from the
10 beginning. Um, it brings, ah, it's a, it's a, it
11 brings me joy to know that Rebecca is gonna be the
12 one that starts having, handling this work after
13 we're all gone. I'm really excited about it. So
14 keep up the good work, um, keep up the good work, and
15 we'll be out of your way in no time, Rebecca. Thank
16 you so much.

17 HUDSON ATHAS: Good morning, Chairman
18 Reynoso and Sanitation Committee members. My name is
19 Hudson Athas. Ah, I'm a 10th-grader at [inaudible],
20 which is on the Lower East Side, and I'm also with
21 Cafeteria Culture. So my experience with, ah,
22 learning about waste management through Cafeteria
23 Culture while seeing the abhorrent conditions of the
24 schools where every day there is litter all over the
25 floor, even on days where it's not necessary, for

2 example, on pizza days students don't need utensils,
3 they still take them out of habit, and it creates
4 massive waste. And it's frustrating to see this,
5 nothing being done about it, and also to turn around
6 and see my local government talking about zero waste
7 by 2030, without seeing any change. Um, and the
8 solutions to these problems are not extremely
9 complicated. There, there's a bill, ah, currently
10 being proposed called Skip the Stuff that would
11 require customers ordering food to opt in to have
12 utensils. The schools could very easily operate
13 under a similar system where students would have to
14 ask for plastic utensils. Or, um, they would bring
15 personal utensils and metal utensils from home. None
16 of these would cost the schools extra money or demand
17 extra resources. These are simple solutions that can
18 be done. As well as, um, sorry, ah, ah, I'm sorry.
19 I, ah, we also need to improve education about these,
20 these waste management systems. In my school, which
21 prided, prides itself on its waste management I have
22 learned nothing about our systems and I only learned
23 through Cafeteria Culture and that's something that
24 definitely needs to be addressed because it is a part
25 of achieving zero waste to teach students how to do

2 it themselves. This is not going to be done by, the
3 goal of a 2030 zero waste New York cannot be done
4 without massive changes to [inaudible] the schools
5 manage their waste. I will yield the rest of my
6 time. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Hudson,
8 for that testimony. Um, just feeling again jus the
9 joy coming from our young people, um, and the lack of
10 support that they have, um, when it comes to
11 education and like civic engagement on trash issues,
12 on, ah, many issues is a big problem, but I love to
13 see that we have two young people here, and I hope if
14 there's a third and fourth just really want to shout
15 out all the young people during this work. Um, I
16 think we all, we are very happy. You make us all
17 very proud. Thank you, Hudson.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
19 is Rhonda Keyser, followed by Debby Lee Cohen,
20 followed by Marcel Kernizan.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

22 RHONDA KEYSER: Hi. Thank you, Chairman
23 Reynoso and members of the Sanitation Committee. I
24 am Rhonda Keyser. I'm outreach director with
25 Cafeteria Culture and I'm testifying today about

2 single-use plastic in school lunch on behalf of our
3 fifth grade student partners from PS-MS188, the
4 Island School in Manhattan. They couldn't be here
5 today. Um, we first want to thank the DOE's Office
6 of Food and Nutrition for the lifeline of 500,000
7 meals that they provide every day across New York
8 City. So since the pandemic started Cafeteria
9 Culture has been faced with a challenge. Without
10 being physically present in schools could we, with
11 students as partners, still collect data and visually
12 document school lunch to continue to inform policy as
13 we have been doing for the past 12 years. Our
14 students answered this challenge with skill and
15 flare. After learning about the impact of plastic
16 pollution from extraction to manufacture to disposal
17 our fifth graders wanted to know what they could do
18 to help. So our students have been documenting the
19 single-use plastic in their lunches, equipped with
20 our camcorders and their very resourceful brains,
21 they are quantifying the single-use plastic items,
22 then iterating and troubleshooting alternative
23 solutions. They are supporting their recommendations
24 using their own data. Students discovered for
25 themselves on our desktop web survey that each lunch

2 has an average of seven plastic pieces that they use
3 for only 20 minutes while they eat. In our math
4 lesson they calculated that seven pieces of plastic
5 packaging in each of the 500,000 lunches served every
6 day. Here are some of our students' practical
7 solutions to reduce single-use plastic in their
8 lunches. Brian introduced the idea to reusing washed
9 plates and utensils instead of throwing it all.
10 Jeremiah added that we could use one crate to bring
11 the milk to classrooms for lunch and not use a
12 separate bag for each milk carton like they do now.
13 Julia suggested that they could bring our spoons and
14 forks and wash them after we eat. Our fifth-graders
15 couldn't be here, but they asked me to share this
16 data with you. If we do nothing and fail to make a
17 zero waste plan by 2030 the seven single-use plastic
18 items in 500,000 school lunches used for 20 minutes
19 will continue to multiply. 3.5 million in one day
20 becomes 630 million in one year, which becomes 5.7
21 billion in the nine years we have left before 2030.
22 That's 5.7 billion pieces of plastic parking in
23 school lunch alone. Elijah worries if we don't do
24 something now probably soon the world is gonna be
25 filled with water instead of land. These wise,

2 resourceful, and hopeful students thank you,
3 especially for Intro 2250, and offer their services
4 if the DSNY needs help to develop a clear zero waste
5 plan. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
7 we'll hear from Debby Lee Cohen, followed by Marcel
8 Kernizan, followed by Robert Markuske.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

10 DEBBY LEE COHEN: Hi, thank you. I'm
11 Debby Lee Cohen from Cafeteria Culture. Um, good
12 afternoon Chairman Reynoso and council members.
13 Thank you so much for this opportunity, not just for
14 me to speak, but for youth to speak, and thank you
15 for letting Rhonda speak on behalf of the fifth-
16 graders at PS-188. Just to let you know, they will
17 be meeting with the directors of the Office of Food
18 and Nutrition Services of Department of Ed to share
19 their data. And on that note I'd like to say, I'd
20 just like to shout out to, um, DOE Offices of Food
21 and Nutrition Services as well as Sustainability that
22 they've done incredible work partnering with us and
23 their efforts to work towards zero waste have been
24 great and commendable, and we will continue to work
25 with them. I'm going to talk today specifically

2 about, um, in support of the bills that have been
3 mentioned as well as the Skip the Stuff in the straw
4 bills, but certainly about establishing a Zero By 30
5 goal and for schools, and to quote, this isn't in my
6 written testimony, but to quote our former chair of
7 Manhattan SWAB and former, ah, commissioner of
8 Sanitation, there is no plan without a timeline, and
9 I hope Brendan Sexton doesn't mind that I quoted him
10 on that [laughs]. But I think about that all the
11 time when anybody introduces a plan without a
12 timeline. On that note, um, we do have an over-
13 reliance, as you heard, of single-use plastic items
14 and plastic packaging, the school waste stream, which
15 is also compromised, comprised of 50% organics,
16 according to the Department of Sanitation 2017 study.
17 A citywide school organics collection program is
18 still waiting to happen and we need creative ideas,
19 bold action, and increased funding for small-scale
20 pilots that can be easily expanded in order to
21 achieve zero waste by 2030. Based on over a decade
22 of leading school cafeteria waste audits and pilots,
23 um, here are a few of our suggestions from Cafeteria
24 Culture for how we might achieve zero waste, and I
25 look forward to meeting with you, Chair Reynoso, in

2 sharing more detail, which is also in our, um,
3 written testimony. First, we should reduce single-
4 use items and single-use plastics in DOE school food
5 service. We should set a target date working with
6 both City Council, Department of Sanitation, and of
7 course Department of Ed so that we no longer use
8 condiment packets. We've already seen in many school
9 cafeterias they're not, you know, you can use pump
10 jars, ah, utensil wrapping that's no, that's around
11 compostables, it's ridiculous to have compostable
12 utensils in non-recyclable packaging, and our school
13 food directors are aware of that, and there's an
14 enormous amount of plastic film wrap being used right
15 now. We ask for the city council to support a
16 citywide plastic-free lunch day. Cafeteria Culture
17 ran a small pilot of this in Brooklyn. It's in our
18 movie, Micro Plastic Madness. And it's a great way,
19 again, it shows how a very small pilot, it was a lot
20 of work, but it was one school. You could see
21 easily how we could scale that up, and we have enough
22 data to see how that could work citywide, and then we
23 could have a one-day-a-week menu day, a plastic-free
24 menu day, such as pizza day. It already almost
25 exists. We could also..

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 DEBBY LEE COHEN: ...DOE contract
4 requirements. This is long overdue. Ah, contractors
5 are rewarded by the best price, but their, but
6 considerations do not, um, include, for instance,
7 minimal or no packaging waste or, um, other
8 sustainable practices or how they treat their
9 employees, or other, ah, greenhouse gas emissions
10 that might be related to the product life cycle. In
11 terms of reducing wasted school food, we don't like
12 to use the word food waste or, um, um, so we're
13 trying to think of other ways to term this, because
14 this is not waste, this is, this is golden resources.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 DEBBY LEE COHEN: Um, I just want to say
17 we need composting for all and we need plate rate,
18 plate waste reduction pilots and this should happen
19 immediately. And third, zero waste climate
20 literacy's for all, P through 12 students beginning
21 with pre-K. Our mayor missed an amazing opportunity
22 when we rolled out these pre-K programs. They are
23 learning how to sort, but not what they're eating for
24 lunch and here they're eating right in the cafeteria.
25 So I look forward to sharing more ideas. We have

2 additional ideas about refillables, um, ah, water
3 refill stations that could be funded by, um, federal
4 stimulus money. We're already talking about that
5 with school food directors and also about a climate
6 education bill that's now in the New York State
7 Senate that could use City Council support and also
8 City Council suggestions. It needs to be, ah, better
9 worded and I feel that New York City is in the
10 absolute position in New York State to assist with
11 that. Thank you so much for time, and thank you
12 council members and Chair and Department of
13 Sanitation, ah, officials who are still here for all
14 the great work that you've done. I look forward to
15 really achieving zero waste by 2030 with a timeline.
16 Thank you so much.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Council
18 Member Rosenthal.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
20 much. Um, Debby, I just, you know, seeing you brings
21 back memories of sort of being on the steps of City
22 Hall and, um, so many times your creative advocacy
23 is, um, brilliant, and I just wanted to take this
24 opportunity to thank you for all your, um, really
25 creative energy, thoughtful approach to working with

2 kids, and, you know, you're so right. Someone like
3 you has to be in the room when policy folks, the
4 mayor's policy folks, are talking about whatever the
5 is, right? So that we are bringing this zero waste
6 lens, um, to every public policy. So anyway I just
7 wanted to thank you for that. Um, you mentioned one
8 thing. I'm, I'm gonna watch the, um, video you
9 mentioned, but there was something else you mentioned
10 that I was gonna ask you send along. Maybe we could
11 just, if you could send me your testimony, um, and we
12 can talk offline...

13 DEBBY LEE COHEN: Absolutely.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'd really
15 appreciate. So anyway thank you for everything.

16 DEBBY LEE COHEN: Thank you so much. And
17 thank you so much for the City Council's support, um,
18 for, that's helped to keep our, ah, pilot education
19 programs going.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, thank you
21 for saying that. Actually that's just reminded me.
22 It was the notion of what we could try to get FEMA
23 reimbursement for.

24 DEBBY LEE COHEN: Oh. So we've already
25 discussed this with the directors of school food and

2 also with our, um, Plastic Pollution Coalition
3 nationally. I mean, the breakthrough from the
4 Plastic Pollution Act. But there is money going
5 school cafeterias and it would be incredible,
6 obviously, it's not enough money for the dream, which
7 is to redo school kitchens all across New York City
8 and put in dishwashers. You know, that would be
9 amazing. But that's not there. What there is enough
10 money for is to put refill stations in every school
11 cafeteria.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I got ya.

13 DEBBY LEE COHEN: In order, healthy clean
14 drinking water, as Rebecca spoke about earlier. This
15 is a huge issue in a lot of schools. School food
16 does, is required now, they have these water jets in
17 many school cafeterias with plastic cups. They don't
18 want to use the refillable bottles because they don't
19 have enough time to pay their employees to keep
20 refilling it. And then there's all these other
21 issues. And then it's in plastic, and it goes on and
22 on.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So could you
24 do me a favor? Could you forward that onto me?

25 DEBBY LEE COHEN: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Um, 'cause
3 I'd, I'd like to try to make that happen. You're,
4 you're talking to the people, um, I want to help lift
5 your voice.

6 DEBBY LEE COHEN: Fantastic. I'll be...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: OK, as always,
8 thank you, Debby.

9 DEBBY LEE COHEN: No problem. Thank you,
10 Council Member Rosenthal.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
12 we'll hear from Marcel Kernizan, followed by Robert
13 Markuske, followed by Jayden T. Haynes.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

15 MARCEL KERNIZAN: Hello, everybody, and
16 good afternoon. My name is Marcel Kernizan and I'm
17 currently a junior of the New York Harbor School and
18 part of the Marine Affairs CTE program. I'm speaking
19 in support of all the bills mentioned today as, as
20 well as for, as well as for the benefits of these
21 bills, specifically job creation and STEM education.
22 The bill, these bills will open up job creation
23 because, because more people will be needed to, to
24 help deliver, pick up, and mandate these compost,
25 these compost sites and waste. This has been a tough

2 year for everyone and people could, people could need
3 the chance to get back up on their feet as well as
4 help out the city, as well as help out the city in a
5 small way, but that could make a major difference.

6 This also has helped my education. I am currently in
7 a program which teaches us about the environment and
8 how it, how it reacts to certain things, especially
9 cities and marine, and marine life, this marine life.

10 I know that kids all over the city [inaudible] all
11 over the, all over the state could use the
12 [inaudible] things that I am learning and that we
13 could teach just by, just by watching what we eat and
14 what we throw away. How can it be reused, how can it
15 be reused and reduced through what we, through what

16 we do and how, sorry, I'm a little bit nervous today,
17 through what we do and how we do it. In conclusion,
18 [inaudible] to help the current generation get

19 through this difficult time, hopefully to the year
20 2022 and can help future generations better, better
21 the city and help them learn about environmental
22 stability and so they can change this world for the
23 better. Thank you for your testimony.

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, Marcel.

25 You did a great job. Thank you, Marcel.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next up is Robert
3 Markuske, followed by Jayden T. Haynes, followed by
4 Kiara Garcia.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

6 ROBERT MARKUSKE: Ah, yeah, that's my
7 student, Marcel, it's gonna be a tough act to follow.
8 Ah, thanks, everybody, for allowing me to speak
9 today. Ah, much of it is in the same vein as other
10 speakers. Um, my name is Rob Markuske. I'm the
11 sustainability coordinator and teacher of Marine
12 Affairs at New York Harbor School. I'm in support of
13 the expansion, planning, and oversight of New York
14 City's zero waste goal. I believe the current bills
15 start the process of shifting our culture to this
16 goal. I think oversight, data analysis, and
17 reimagining how the school is reached are very
18 present. Ah, however, I found planning and
19 reimagining plans, oversight, and collecting data
20 sometimes only goes so far. Ah, while reading 2250
21 from A through I it's the same process my students
22 that are present today and I go through yearly, um,
23 to make zero waste happen at our school. Ah,
24 generally, needless to say, our plan to go zero waste
25 is always foiled. Ah, plans, goals, need to be

2 committed, followed through, and constantly
3 reimagined and realistic. Lastly, they don't need to
4 be combatted by a system, ah, that is often
5 mismanaged with empty promises. Ah, often the zero
6 waste initiatives are only carried out by those who
7 know it's the right thing to do. In addition,
8 systems like the DOE, even that's something that will
9 kind of happen, ah, from the people that care, in my
10 opinion, of course. Um, more importantly, these
11 initiatives are sometimes isolated, ah, with success
12 stories, but not system-wide. Um, you can't talk
13 about waste management unless you talk about the
14 environment. You can't talk about the environment
15 unless you talk about economics. You can't talk
16 about economics unless you talk about inequities of
17 systemic racism and class. These issues of zero
18 waste are very intersectional. Year and year out I'm
19 pursuing the mandated DOE initiative of having a
20 sustainability coordinator. I'm left to manage this
21 system without much support or the power of being
22 listening to the changes the students want. We are
23 left with poor sorting stations, lunch materials, and
24 more plastic than I can count. The functions of the
25 DOE almost made these zero waste goal impossible.

2 Now the statements come from, this statement comes
3 from my personal from a campus that can sort its own
4 food scraps, make compost, and focus on marine
5 education. Um, I'm, I don't need ideas at this
6 moment. Ah, we kind of need action. Ah, for
7 instance, we have a dishwasher. Soap won't be bought
8 and people don't want to empty it. Ah, as my
9 students teach me, many of us function out of
10 convenience or necessity. We need to make waste
11 divergence accessible and convenient for all. So the
12 powers need to consult stakeholders, who do this work
13 in their communities and for those that are impacted
14 by the progress, or, for instance, the lack of
15 thereof. This needs to be the purposeful and
16 invested with the view that this will pay off later.
17 Although we need a balanced budget in planning zero
18 waste the main goal shouldn't be monetary return,
19 although the factor shouldn't be the driving force.
20 I think one of the main stakeholders that could
21 contribute to this goal and public schools...

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 ROBERT MARKUSKE: Um, however, currently
24 they aren't, ah, supported. I'll just close with
25 this. Ah, my students are here today with me.

2 They're ready to help and are trained at USO. I just
3 want to close with one little story. Currently the
4 students that are present today and myself are
5 collecting food scraps from the students that are
6 going to school at home remotely, ah, because either
7 they don't have access to drop-off sites 'cause of
8 COVID or they never had access to it. Um, so I just
9 want to close with that little personal story. So,
10 thanks for letting me speak.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
12 is Jayden T. Haynes, followed by Kiara Garcia,
13 followed by Gabriella McCalpin.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

15 JAYDEN T. HAYNES: Good afternoon,
16 everybody. Um, my name is Jayden Haynes. I'm a
17 junior attending New York Harbor School and a member
18 of the environmental advocacy and Marine Affairs
19 program. The speaker before, Robert Markuske, is my
20 teacher and I'm a part of his program to help
21 sustainability and, um, and overall earth matter.
22 Today, you know, like we all have all addressed the
23 issue of opportunities and environmental
24 sustainability. I support the policies, ah, 2250 and
25 844 for this specific reason, as a focus on not only

2 encouraging environmental awareness in all
3 communities, but providing opportunities for jobs,
4 ah, and communities working together in the aftermath
5 of the COVID-19 pandemic. By supporting the
6 proposals and bills we can set in place a new stage
7 for younger generations and older generations in all
8 communities to take interest in environmental
9 sustainability with the added benefit of providing
10 jobs in these fields. Funding these bills and
11 reinstating the previous funding will not only help
12 the community in the short term, but as well as in
13 the long term by getting members of all groups
14 exposed to careers and studies for our generation
15 leading to the, ah, leading to the development of
16 sustainability efforts and job availability. Thank
17 you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
19 is Kiara Garcia, followed by Gabriella McCalpin,
20 followed by Jay Peltz.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

22 KIARA GARCIA: Hi, good afternoon. My
23 name is Kiara Garcia. I'm [inaudible] Earth Matter
24 and Marine Affairs, and also a student at the Urban
25 Assembly near [inaudible]. I am here before you all

2 to talk about the importance of becoming a more
3 sustainable city towards this, oh, well, yeah, of
4 becoming a more sustainable city and adjusting
5 towards this would allow us to become zero waste and
6 will create more job opportunities for people,
7 meaning it would potentially help end homelessness.
8 Creating these opportunities will help tie up the
9 issues we face now and can be faced later on in the
10 future, such as water and air pollution, sea level
11 rising, and not enough arable lands to grow crops on.
12 By becoming more sustainable we will exempt these
13 issues from later on in the future, but that's if we
14 start now. This city is going to constantly keep
15 growing and as it grows sustainability needs to grow
16 with it. Sustainability needs to be a part of our
17 lives and not just an afterthought. Our current
18 economic system is more focused on creating
19 millionaires and not creating a more sustainable
20 environment. We need to do better and in order to do
21 that we need to educate not only ourselves but the
22 [inaudible] generation as well. We need to make this
23 a part of our educational system and we need to clean
24 up after ourselves, compost, reuse, and recycle. The
25 above legislation, 2250 and 844, will help put this

2 all [inaudible] because our current system doesn't do
3 enough. That's it. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next is
5 Gabriella McCalpin, followed by Jay Peltz, followed
6 by Carlos Castell Croke.

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And I just want to
8 keep reiterating to these young people, thank you so
9 much, um, and to their mentors and their teachers
10 that are also empowering them to, to, to be here, um,
11 and speak. Ah, they've done a great job. Jayden,
12 thank you as well. I know the [inaudible] you guys
13 are doing amazing work. Keep, keep it up. And I
14 think, ah, Council Member Chin wants to say something
15 as well. Council Member Chin?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes. I am so proud
17 of these students because he Harbor School is my
18 district, Governors Island. And they [inaudible]...

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Oh, stop, stop
20 bragging, Council Member Chin, oh.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [laughs]

22 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: [laughs]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But, but Chair
24 Reynoso, there is gonna be a middle school in every
25 borough, a middle, yeah, a Harbor School middle

2 school in every borough. And we just got the, you
3 know, OK to expand Harbor School on Governors Island.
4 So we're gonna have a pool there, a gym, I mean, it's
5 great, and just looking at these students, I am so
6 proud, um, that we were here to support them and they
7 are the one that's gonna lead the way, ah, to make
8 sure that we get zero waste by 2030 and beyond.
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And thank you to
12 all the teachers and, ah, Debby, I mean, you guys
13 guide the students and, and really help us. I just
14 so, so appreciate it. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you, thank
16 you. Keep it up, keep it up. Let's keeping moving,
17 let's go.

18 GABRIELLA MCCALPIN: Thank you. Um,
19 hello, everyone. My name is, my name is Gabriella
20 McCalpin of the Marine Affairs and advocacy CTE from
21 New York Harbor School. I'm an 11th grader and I'm
22 an active, I'm an active environmentalism advocate
23 and [inaudible] in the environment and how the city
24 and this council have handled such good care, but
25 I've participated in [inaudible] and helps give away

2 reusable guides and have participated in the climate
3 change protests two years in a row. Protecting the
4 environment is now one of my core values. And I just
5 hope I can help [inaudible] change at the age I am
6 now. I [inaudible] the bill and [inaudible]. I'm
7 sorry. On or before July 1, 2021, New York City's
8 mayor and administrator will support the bill of, of
9 setting zero waste [inaudible] can reuse and recycle
10 new materials and an analysis of zero waste economic
11 and [inaudible] I'm sorry about [inaudible] parts.
12 Seeing as how the city already took the initiative
13 to, to ban the use of plastic bags and how is our
14 [inaudible] that is an example. [inaudible] it's
15 been advised to [inaudible] materials and food scraps
16 into compost. Of course, we are [inaudible]. So
17 [inaudible] myself and my fellow colleagues to sort
18 your [inaudible] anyway at least before it reaches
19 the tub [inaudible]. There are so many [inaudible]
20 in the system and this is all on a tiny island just
21 off the coast of Manhattan. And [inaudible] and
22 opportunities and jobs [inaudible] city. And some of
23 you will argue but we already have [inaudible]
24 programs [inaudible] which is true. But they're only
25 in certain areas [inaudible] well-off areas of the

2 city. The same neighborhoods with less people of
3 color and [inaudible]. The [inaudible] and
4 environmental benefit from the systems are completely
5 disregarded by the city. I've never seen a
6 [inaudible] site or even a Whole Foods or [inaudible]
7 neighborhood in the Bronx, in the Bronx, Queens,
8 Manhattan or Brooklyn. For example, I'm from Corona,
9 Queens, and I am, we don't have like the most amazing
10 thing, the most like nice thing we have is like a
11 Marshall's or a Century 21 [inaudible]. But, um,
12 going back to my point again one of the [inaudible]
13 sorry [inaudible]. People, people of color deserve
14 the zero waste, too. According to my mentor, as the
15 city goes district [inaudible]. Sustainability
16 should be part of every plan and not an afterthought.
17 Thank you. I thought that was great.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
19 we'll from Jay Peltz, followed by Carlos Castell
20 Croke, followed by Christine Hegel.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

22 JAY PELTZ: Thank you for the opportunity
23 to testify on the [inaudible] regarding Intro 2103.
24 My name is Jay Peltz and I manage Downstate
25 Government Relations for FIA, a nonprofit, profit

2 trade association that advocates on behalf of
3 grocery, drug, and convenience stores throughout the
4 state. While FIA and its members support efforts to
5 reduce hunger in New York, including our members'
6 donation of at least hundreds of thousands of pounds
7 of food every year, we respectfully oppose this
8 legislation. Neighborhood grocers have never faced a
9 more difficult regulatory and operating environment.
10 I refer you to my submitted testimony for details.
11 This context should be considered when proposing
12 additional regulatory burdens. In addition, this
13 legislation should be considered in the context of
14 the New York State Food Donation and Food Scraps
15 recycling law. This statute requires large
16 generators of food scraps to donate excess edible
17 food "to the maximum extent practicable." The
18 proposed DEC rule impinging the state law defines
19 "maximum extent practicable" as the degree to which
20 the maximum amount of edible food can be donated for
21 human consumption without jeopardizing human health
22 and the environment by implementing best management
23 practices, taking into account cost effectiveness and
24 feasibility. This legislation goes well beyond this
25 requirement, specifically requiring that stores offer

2 excess food for donation, arrange for the retrieval
3 of the excess food by its recipient, and if requested
4 by a donee arrange for the transportation of the
5 excess food. It does not require that donations be
6 "practicable", or not jeopardize human health. These
7 [inaudible] are onerous and unnecessary considering
8 our members' food donations and recycling. In
9 addition, due to the city's organic waste diversion
10 law, grocers operating in the city are specifically
11 excluded from the state law. In other words, the
12 state exempted the city's grocers from its food
13 donation mandate because the city's organic waste
14 diversion law makes it unnecessary to include them
15 since food can be recycled, can be donated or
16 recycled and not wind up in an incinerator or a
17 landfill. We see no rationale for the state to have
18 a conflicting view. As noted above, FIA's members
19 donate at least hundreds of thousands of pounds of
20 food every year. Additional tons are recycled. The
21 exemption incorporated into the bill does not reflect
22 the [inaudible] since it only applies if food is
23 donated at least once a month to two or more not-for-
24 profit organizations. The bill also gives rise to
25 significant legal issues. According to the *Legal*

2 *Dictionary*, the legal definition of a donation is
3 "the act by which the owner of the thing voluntarily
4 transfers the title and possession of the same from
5 himself to another person without any consideration,
6 a gift, voluntarily transfers." Requiring stores to
7 offer excess food for donation makes the offer
8 involuntary, which means it is not a donation. If it
9 is not a donation, then what it is? Is it the taking
10 of private property without compensation? Is
11 mandating that grocers use their resources to arrange
12 for the retrieval and transportation of the excess
13 food also taking of private property without
14 compensation? Please share with us the city's legal
15 rationale establish that a required contribution of
16 private property is in fact a donation. The proposed
17 local law also raises a First Amendment issue by
18 compelling commercial speech with a mandated notice
19 offering excess food for donation. This is a
20 complicated issue that should be analyzed further to
21 ensure that an unconstitutional obligation is not
22 imposed on the city's grocers. Finally, the
23 penalties authorized under the legislation are
24 excessive.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2 JAY PELTZ: The failure to comply with
3 the law results in the penalty up to \$10,000 for each
4 month during which a store fails to post the required
5 notice. Basically the maximum penalty could be
6 \$60,000. It's much more, these penalties are much
7 higher than the penalties specified in the organic
8 waste diversion law and even higher potentially than
9 the penalties for committing certain crimes. Um,
10 while we respectfully oppose the proposal of the law,
11 we support increasing food donations. We are happy
12 to explore ways of accomplishing that goal with
13 Council Member Rosenthal and the other committee
14 members. Accordingly, we respectfully ask that the
15 bill be held in committee while such discussions
16 occur...

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

18 JAY PELTZ: ...[inaudible] legal issues.

19 I'm sorry?

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

21 JAY PELTZ: Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
23 is Carlos Castell Croke, followed by Christine Hegel,
24 followed by Phoebe Flaherty.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

2 CARLOS CASTELL CROKE: OK. Ah, good
3 afternoon. Ah, my name is Carlos Castell Croke and I
4 am the associate for New York City programs at the
5 New York League of Conservation Voters. Ah, NYLCV
6 represents over 30,000 members in New York City and
7 we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda
8 that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our
9 economy healthier and more resilient. I'd like to
10 thank Chair Reynoso and for all the committees on the
11 community the opportunity to testify today. NYLCV
12 along with many New Yorkers and climate advocates
13 strongly believe that reducing our waste is essential
14 to fighting climate change. Food encompasses a third
15 of our city's waste and when that, this waste is put
16 into landfills it produces a significant amount of
17 methane, a greenhouse gas 30 times more potent than
18 carbon dioxide. Furthermore, the city produces a
19 substantial amount of waste through single-use
20 plastic, such as plastic straws and take-out
21 utensils. These items often end up in our waterways
22 and streets so they can be harmful to wildlife.
23 However, with proper waste reduction and recycling
24 methods in place, we can develop and implement a
25 climate-smart approach to waste management. Since

2 the curbside compost pilot was scrapped and waste
3 reduction programs were heavily defunded in the FY21
4 budget, we believe that it is more important than
5 ever to double down on Mayor de Blasio's stated goals
6 [inaudible] zero waste landfills by the year 2030.
7 New York League of Conservation Voters' education
8 fund and our climate tracker, which reports on the
9 city's progress towards many of the environmental
10 goals in OneNYC estimates that in order to achieve
11 Zero By 30 we must reduce our waste by 8% each year
12 on average. To achieve this kind of reduction we
13 will need strong commitments from all stakeholders
14 and bold legislation that tackles waste head on.
15 NYLCV therefore strongly supports Introduction 2250
16 and 844, as they will get us back on track with the
17 waste reduction goals established in OneNYC. Intro
18 2250 will require the Department of Sanitation
19 reports regularly on the city's progress towards this
20 goal, and Intro 844 will codify the goal into the
21 city's administrative, ah, code. These bills will
22 enforce the commitment originally established in
23 OneNYC and ensure the level of accountability that we
24 need to achieve this goal. These bills will be an
25 important step towards achieving Zero By 30, but

2 there is still much more to be done. In order to
3 achieve Zero By 30 we will need to bring back
4 curbside, the curbside compost program, expanded to
5 serve all New Yorkers and take other actions to
6 reduce waste and increase recycling. We look forward
7 to working with the New York City Council on
8 implementing the bold and progressive waste reduction
9 laws that will put us towards Zero By 30. Thank you
10 for the opportunity to testify.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next will
12 be Christine Hegel, followed by Phoebe Flaherty,
13 followed by Christine Datz-Romero.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

15 CHRISTINE HEGEL: Thank you. My name is
16 Christine Hegel and I'm a board member of a nonprofit
17 neighborhood sustainability and redemption center
18 called Sure We Can in the East Williamsburg IBZ of
19 Brooklyn. In this capacity and as a board member of
20 the Canner Advocacy task force and a researcher
21 focused on how informal workers help cities capture
22 renewable materials in the waste stream. I firstly
23 want to express full support for Intro 844, the
24 city's zero waste by 2030 goal. The question is how
25 can the stated goal become a plan, as suggested in

2 Intro 202050 to encourage citizen participate and
3 utilize the expertise and dedicated labor of informal
4 waste workers. Research from around the globe shows
5 that waste pickers who are skilled in post-consumer
6 materials segregation can be the key to reaching
7 material recovery targets. Our zero waste plan for
8 the resource recovery can and should be inclusive.
9 For New York City to reach zero waste goals by 2030
10 we have to think of every New Yorker as a critical
11 node in material recovery value chains and we need to
12 understand that convenience is key to resource
13 recovery. This means that every New Yorker needs to
14 have convenient locations to bring post-consumer
15 materials that have untapped value. New Yorkers need
16 neighborhood sustainability centers to learn critical
17 repair skills so that they can reuse rather than
18 throw away, and to bring items that can free cycled
19 and up cycled. They need neighborhood centers to
20 learn about circular economy best practices.
21 Citizens want to participate and the city needs to
22 make it easy for them to do so. To achieve zero
23 waste goals we also need to expand the capacity of
24 the New York State bottle bill, a great example of
25 EPR. The bill is currently responsible for a 70%

2 diversion rate or higher for single-use deposit-
3 marked containers. Is this because every New Yorker
4 redeems our cans and bottles to get their nickel
5 back? No, they don't. It's not convenient to carry
6 their cans and bottles back to the grocery store and
7 stand in line outside the use a reverse vending
8 machine. But for poor New Yorkers redeeming bottles
9 and cans can be a lifesaver. Those who do this work,
10 canners, expand the capacity of this system. They
11 hold producers like Coca-Cola and Budweiser
12 accountable, like we all should be doing. Their work
13 benefits New York City while also providing vital
14 income. Council Member Danny Dromm, I want to thank
15 you as well as Council Members Antonio Reynoso,
16 Carlina Rivera, Diana Ayala, Jimmy Van Bramer, Kevin
17 Riley, and Helen Rosenthal for your support for
18 public funding for Sure We Can and for our vision of
19 community nonprofit redemption and sustainability
20 centers. We make bottle redemption easy and
21 convenient for canners and non-canners alike, and
22 every day we reinforce the message that recycling,
23 reuse, and repair are dignified activities that
24 everyone can participate in to protect our shared
25 environment. We fully support and want to be a

2 partner to make the zero waste by 2030 plan a
3 reality. Thank you for allowing me to testify.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
5 is Phoebe Flaherty, followed by Christine Datz-
6 Romero, followed by Justin Green.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins.

8 PHOEBE FLAHERTY: Hi, good afternoon, and
9 thanks for the opportunity to testify. My name is
10 Phoebe Flaherty. I'm an organizer at Align. And we
11 coordinate the Transform Don't Trash Coalition and
12 Climate Works For All Coalition, both of which are
13 dedicated to creating bold climate policies and a
14 just transition for workers. Moving towards our
15 city's zero waste goals is critical to not only
16 reducing New York's carbon emissions, but also to
17 creating good green jobs throughout New York City.
18 The implementation of commercial waste zones is an
19 example of this. The program will reduce New York's
20 [inaudible] emissions, reducing truck miles and
21 increasing recycling and organics collection, and
22 will create good green jobs by increasing worker
23 standards and safety. We must fully fund and
24 implement this climate safety and green jobs program.
25 Zero waste policies, such as mandatory organics

2 recycling, expanding recycling participation,
3 expanding community drop-off sites, supporting micro
4 haulers and more, being heard here today, can have a
5 similar impact of reducing our city's overall
6 emissions while also spurring the creation of good
7 green jobs. Throughout the process of moving us
8 towards these goals we must prioritize labor
9 standards and investments in underemployed New York
10 City communities at a time when New York's BIPOC
11 communities have been devastated by COVID and the
12 ensuing unemployment epidemic, creating good green
13 union jobs must be a priority of the city. We have
14 an opportunity now to address climate change and put
15 New Yorkers back to work. Let's move towards a just
16 transitional and equitable recovery for New York
17 City. Thanks so much for your time and the
18 opportunity to testify today.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
20 is Christine Datz-Romero, followed by Justin Green,
21 followed by Dior St. Hillaire.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time begins. The
23 clock is ready.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may have to
25 accept the unmute. OK. We will for now, we'll come

2 back to you, Christine, but we'll move on to, um,
3 Justin Green for now. Justin.

4 JUSTIN GREEN: Hi. Um, thank you to the
5 City Council for holding this hearing. Um, I'm
6 Justin Green. I'm the executive director of Big
7 Reuse, a environmental nonprofit focused on waste
8 reduction, fighting climate change, and creating
9 green jobs. Um, I want to especially thank, ah,
10 Council Member, ah, Reynoso for being such an
11 innovative and exciting progressive leader of the,
12 ah, Sanitation Committee, with so many amazing
13 strides during his leadership. Um, I also want to
14 thank Department of Sanitation for their continuing
15 support of community composting. These innovative
16 projects have been nationally recognized, um, and we
17 just recently actually won US Composter of the Year
18 Award for our site in Queens, um, that has been in
19 close partnership with the Department of Sanitation
20 and Parks. Um, you know, I, as someone who has been
21 working in waste reduction and composting for the
22 last 15 years, I really want to strongly advocate
23 that we strive, ah, zero waste by 2030. I mean,
24 it's, ah, gonna be a reach, but we have to, with the,
25 ah, increasing impacts and climate change, um, we

1
2 have to strive to, for, for a [inaudible]. It can't
3 be reasonable right now. The effects of climate
4 change are not gonna be reasonable. So we can't
5 moderate and, and try to do we, you know, what's
6 easy. We have to really strive and change the
7 systems of overconsumption, ah, waste that have
8 driven us to this point. Um, Big Reuse currently is
9 doing what we can, and we pick up from 48 food scrap
10 drop-offs and growing throughout Queens, Brooklyn,
11 and the Bronx. We run two community composting sites
12 that compost over 2 million pounds of residential and
13 parks organic waste and give that compost to over 300
14 community groups to green New York City. We support
15 the zero waste, ah, policy. We support the, um, 2250
16 for reporting on zero waste progress, and, um, 2003
17 for diverting, ah, reasonable food waste. Um, the
18 city, we also support, um, the implementation of Save
19 as You Throw to fund the zero waste initiatives.
20 That's a crucial first step to both reducing, um,
21 waste and increasing composting and recycling. We
22 would like to see the, ah, immediate cessation of
23 incineration of New York City trash. Um, this
24 totally unacceptable to, ah, burden other communities
25 with our toxic, ah, incineration waste. Um, and then

2 specifically for our operations, you know, while we
3 are us in Lower East Side and Earth Matter are one of
4 the primary composters for the whole city right now
5 and we all are being pushed off our sites, um, during
6 this, this period when we are the primary composters.
7 So we are asking the city again to extend our
8 licenses for Lower East Side Ecology Center site and,
9 and build them into the East River resiliency plan to
10 work with Earth Matter on Governors Island. We also
11 support the, ah, 14 million...

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 JUSTIN GREEN: ...dollar request to
14 support composting for next year in, ah, fiscal 22.
15 Thanks so much for your time and support for these
16 projects.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
18 is Dior St. Hillaire, followed by Jane Selden,
19 followed by Oliver Wright.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

21 DIOR ST. HILLAIRE: Ah, thank you for the
22 opportunity to testify today. Good afternoon. My
23 name is Dior St. Hillaire and I am the founder of
24 Green Think, a Bronx-based educational consulting
25 firm using hip hop and environmental sustainability

2 to create culturally responsive content that supports
3 curriculum development and engagement. As a worker-
4 owned cooperative [inaudible] organics we adopt the
5 principles of environmental justice, waste equity,
6 and a circular economy. Our model is designed to
7 collect and process organic waste locally. It takes
8 the investment of city and state agencies, private
9 entities, the resident school, community-based
10 organizations and institutions in order to truly
11 achieve zero waste. In order to get zero waste we
12 must have a circular economy in place that supports
13 renewable growth and not simply linear. This issue
14 is more complex than recycling correctly or diverting
15 organizations, although those are tangible things
16 that will move in the right direction. We are
17 facing, ah, what we are facing is a disposable
18 culture and society that treats waste like someone
19 else's problem when it is truly the responsibility of
20 both producers and consumers alike. The
21 consciousness that is necessary to develop around
22 consuming less will be inspired through a heavy
23 investment in education as well as legislation that
24 holds producers to a more sustainable standard of
25 production. It is through Green Think organics that

2 we were able to maintain momentum for diverting
3 organic waste when the city decided to cut the budget
4 last year. This has to be valued by the city as
5 necessary and a vital part to achieving zero waste
6 goals. We have a unique opportunity to continue to
7 position ourselves with influence in the world.

8 However, by disrupting the consistency in organics
9 collection we sent a global message that this is not
10 important to the livelihood of our residents. Access
11 to clean air, a clean environment, meaningful and
12 safe jobs, amongst a host of other things. As a
13 micro hauler in New York City I find it immensely
14 important that the city prioritizes support of local
15 processing capacity through the use of city-owned
16 land, which can lead to more green jobs, less truck
17 traffic, and ultimately less export of our waste,
18 allowing us to reinvest our export dollars back into
19 our city, further contributing to a circular economy.

20 Choosing a cooperative model ensures that as
21 residents live and work in the same neighborhood we
22 are able to lead and control how the decisions that
23 affect us are made. The fact is if we don't strive
24 towards zero waste we will continue to participate in
25 targeting poor environmental justice communities to

2 pass waste through transfer stations. The networks
3 are here and we must honor the relationship, the
4 innovators, the creative, who have already started
5 the work while figuring how to grow and allow access
6 for others to get involved. We believe that by
7 expanding the planning process to include a
8 perspective of worker-owned cooperatives, Intro 2250,
9 2103, 844 can accomplish a larger vision of a more
10 equitable waste system and considers the perspective
11 of a population that is invested in truly what
12 happens at a local level. So I wouldn't be green
13 queen if I didn't leave you with a hip hop rhyme. So
14 what is the zero waste goal if we can't even see the
15 importance of processing locally. 2030 is like in
16 nine years and with nine million people the vision is
17 clear. Intro 844 sets the goal, Intro 2250 paves the
18 road, and 2103 does a few things. These [inaudible]
19 save food and limits composting because the truth is
20 wasted food is wasted energy. Compost is the last
21 solution if there's people to feed. But to truly
22 make this real we have to pass by [inaudible] and
23 collectively build. Thank you for your time and have
24 a wonderful rest of the hearing. I'm here and I'm
25 present. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
3 will be Jane Selden, followed by Oliver Wright,
4 followed by Walter Dogan.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

6 JANE SELDEN: Ah, first I would like to
7 thank, ah, Chair Reynoso and the Committee on
8 Sanitation, ah, for giving me the opportunity to
9 speak today. My name is Jane Selden and I'm here
10 representing 350 NYC, which is a member of the Save
11 Our Compost Coalition and of Climate Works For All.
12 As an environmental group we recognize the vital role
13 waste reduction plays in reducing greenhouse gas
14 emissions. While New Yorkers have the potential to
15 recycle 68% of their trash, the current recycling
16 rate is a mere 18%. This means that most of the
17 12,000 tons of daily residential trash ends up in
18 landfills, which emit methane, a greenhouse gas 30
19 times more powerful than CO₂, or it ends up in
20 incinerators, which produce CO₂ and toxins like
21 dioxin, nitrous oxide, and lead. Landfills and
22 incinerators are generally located in low-income
23 communities and communities of color, whose residents
24 suffer from a range of adverse health problems. The
25 de Blasio administration's 2015 zero waste to

3 landfill by 30 plan cites expansion of organics
4 collection as, as its number one priority. Yet even
5 before the pandemic the city's residential organics
6 collection rate was a little over 1%. And this past
7 year we have seen cancellation of curbside recycling,
8 draconian funding cuts to community-based composting
9 and community-based composting programs. This means
10 that even more waste is being transferred, is being
11 trucked to the city's transfer waste stations, which,
12 like landfills and incinerators, are located in
13 environmental justice community, communities, where
14 residents are already subjected to unhealthy levels
15 of air pollution. And to make matters worse, the
16 Parks Department, ah, announced that they plan to
17 evict Big Reuse and the Lower East Side Ecology
18 Center from their much-needed composting sites.
19 These are clearly not the actions of an
20 administration that is truly committed to
21 prioritizing organics waste recycling. What we need
22 is more than just a pledge. We need laws that will
23 ensure steady progress towards making zero waste
24 goals a reality, regardless of the administration
25 currently in power. That's why we support Intros 844
and 2250, which is establish zero waste as a low and

2 provide a road map for achieving it. We will, we
3 also support 2103, a bill that will not only divert
4 food store waste from landfill, but will serve the
5 needs of the over 1.5 million New Yorkers, including
6 one in four children, who currently suffer from food
7 insecurity. Finally, we would like to thank the City
8 Council for supporting the Climate Works For All's
9 request for 3 million dollars for implementing the
10 commercial waste zone laws and 14.8 million dollars
11 for composting for the fiscal year 2022 budget. This
12 funding will not only create good green jobs at a
13 time of soaring unemployment, especially in low-
14 income communities, but will move us further along
15 the path to mandatory citywide organics recycling.
16 Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
18 is Oliver Wright, followed by Walter Dogan, followed
19 by Joel Berg.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

21 OLIVER WRIGHT: Thank you. Good
22 afternoon, Chairman Reynoso and members of the
23 Sanitation Committee. I am pleased to provide this
24 testimony on behalf of the Solid Waste Advisory
25 Boards of Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. We

2 welcome a review of the city's progress towards zero
3 waste, um, in light of the continuing pressures
4 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that now
5 is an ideal time to make a comprehensive case for
6 zero waste, including its financial, environmental,
7 and social benefits. The Zero By 30 goal was
8 introduced in 2015 and DSNY subsequently produced a
9 strategic plan in 2016. Both of these set numerous
10 policy and program aims, but they stopped short of
11 setting definitive, quantitative, and time tables for
12 their pursuit. The city's current solid waste
13 management plan is also due to expire in 2026.
14 Drafting of the next one typically begins several
15 years in advance by, in a couple of years' time.
16 This new solid waste management plan must focus on
17 reduction of waste to landfill and incineration,
18 including prevention, reuse, and recycling. It
19 therefore makes sense that the Zero By 30 review to
20 feed directly into this work. As such, we urge the
21 DSNY to extend and expand the planning process
22 outlined in Intro 2250 and to go beyond devising an
23 extended menu of initiatives and instead create a
24 plan towards zero waste where every initiative has a
25 deadline and a quantifiable goal. This plan should

3 be thoroughly budgeted, both to make the case that
4 moving towards zero waste is financially beneficial
5 for the city and also to enable long-range planning.
6 It should be equitable with a strong focus on
7 environmental justice, as several of our colleagues
8 have already eloquently expressed, and it should go
9 beyond the traditional purview of DSNY, for example
10 by including the Parks Department and the Department
11 of Environmental Protection in the management of
12 organic waste. Two essential elements are worth
13 highlighting. The first is to ensure integration of
14 various planning processes that are already underway,
15 such as the ongoing work of the state's Climate
16 Action Council and implementation of commercial waste
17 zones. The second element is ensuring that the
18 process is expertly advised and includes a deep
19 commitment to stakeholder engagement. Other cities,
20 such as Boston and Austin, have zero waste plans that
21 benefitted from multiyear stakeholder engagement
22 processes and we need to ensure that DSNY is proposal
23 resourced to do something similar. In addition to
24 the ongoing work of the borough-based solid waste
25 advisory boards, now would also be an opportune time
to reconstruct the citywide, ah, sorry, Citywide

2 Recycling Advisory Board, or CRAP, which was mandated
3 under Local Law 19 of 1989 as a means of ensuring
4 ongoing public engagement. In summer, we believe
5 that planning for zero waste should be a higher
6 priority than constructing a list of actions to be
7 taken at this stage. Thank you for your
8 consideration and time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next is
10 Walter Dogan, followed by Joel Berg, followed by Matt
11 Gove.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may have to
14 accept the unmute.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I just want to
16 thank, ah, Oliver for testifying on behalf of SWABs.
17 Very happy to see the SWABs out and about and very
18 active. Thank you so much for the work you're doing,
19 sir. Thank you.

20 OLIVER WRIGHT: It's exhausting.

21 WALTER DOGAN: Good afternoon to Chairman
22 Reynoso and all of the other esteemed members of this
23 committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present
24 today. My name is Walter Dogan. I'm the president
25 of Brinkerhoff Action Association, a community

2 organization in southeast Queens. I'm in the area of
3 Community Board 12 and within a half-mile radius of
4 two waste transfer stations that resides on Douglas
5 Avenue and Liberty Avenue. I'm hereby today
6 representing Addisleigh Park Civics, St. Albans
7 Civics, Greater Triangle Civics. We're asking to
8 please pay attention to the legislation being passed.
9 The Department of Sanitation, we're asking that the
10 Department of Sanitation report on the city's
11 progress towards sending zero waste to landfills.
12 Local Law 152, the waste equity law that passed in
13 August 2018 were the beginning steps of this
14 initiative as the legislation meant a reduction in
15 the permitted capacity waste allowed at facilities in
16 districts that were deemed overburdened, such as my
17 community, southeast Queens Community Board 12.
18 Although the law meant a reduction of the putrescible
19 waste by 30%, in actuality it was reduced by about
20 9%. The data transporting was about 17, 1737 tons
21 per day from an average in 2019. The post Local Law
22 152 capacity has been reduced to 1581. Our community
23 welcomes a reduction and even more welcome the cap
24 that would not be allowed, that would not allow an
25 increase in this waste. Although the waste equity

2 bill has passed and now the commercial waste zone
3 bill has passed, there is still a need to improve the
4 operation of the existing transfer facility that
5 exists in the residential area M1 zone. The operator
6 of those facilities must better manage the leachate
7 generation, dust control, and elimination of the
8 noxious fumes that emanate from the facility because
9 the facility is not fully enclosed. We were recently
10 informed that there are plans to demolish the
11 existing buildings and to replace and build three new
12 waste management and recycling facilities. While we
13 welcome the news of new facilities we are concerned
14 that the cap that was placed due to the waste bills
15 will be compromised and possibly lifted. The purpose
16 of Local Law 152 was to reduce the amount of waste
17 coming into our overburdened environmental justice
18 community and that needs to remain, and increase, any
19 increase in allowed capacity beside being a hazard,
20 hazard, and a burden to nearby residents will be
21 contradiction to the goal of zero waste to landfills.
22 Thank you for your opportunity. Thank you for the
23 opportunity to be here, and thank you for your
24 attention.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
3 we'll hear from Joel Berg, followed by Matt Gove,
4 followed by Clare Mifflin.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

6 JOEL BERG: Hello. Hello, I'm Joel Berg,
7 CEO of Hunger Free American. First let me say as a
8 lifelong environmental activist and a citizen of the
9 City of New York, I'm thrilled that the City Council
10 is placing so much emphasis on waste reduction. It's
11 very, very important for the environment. I, um,
12 unfortunately chagrined to have to state that as an
13 anti-hunger advocate and expert and food waste
14 expert, ah, Intro 2103 isn't as well designed as it
15 should be. I don't think we'll really achieve its,
16 ah, intended goals, would do very little, if
17 anything, to reduce hunger in America, but I do think
18 would be an undue burden on, on the food industry .
19 Let me explain. You know, I was the chief federal
20 official in the 1990s at the US Department of
21 Agriculture in charge of reducing food waste for the
22 entire, ah, federal government. And I worked with
23 the EPA to develop a food waste reduction hierarchy
24 that said in a perfect world if food is good enough
25 to feed to humans, feed it to humans. If it's good

2 enough to feed, if it's not good enough to feed to
3 humans, feed it to animals. If you can't feed to
4 animals compost it and only as a very last resort
5 should it go in the solid waste stream. And it is,
6 ah, a great shame and scandal that food is still the
7 largest single component of the solid waste stream in
8 New York and in most parts of the United States. So
9 reducing food waste is an important thing. It will
10 help the environment greatly, since we have such
11 carbon usage to transport this waste states away, but
12 would do very little to reduce hunger in, in New York
13 City. First, it's important to understand that it's
14 often cheaper for a charity to buy food than to
15 travel to pick up donated food. Let me repeat that.
16 It's cheaper to buy food than often to pick up
17 donated food. Before the crisis, City Harvest had a
18 minimum of 100-pound pickup. Since the crisis it's
19 moved to mostly picking up pallets. I greatly
20 respect my environmental colleagues on the call, but
21 I don't think it's a coincidence. I don't believe
22 there's a single hunger group in the city, ah, who's
23 advocating on behalf of this bill because the way
24 it's structured doesn't make sense. Ah, the food
25 that stores do have to donate is usually, ah, ones

2 that has a very [inaudible] with limited shelf life
3 and so posting once a month would not be workable,
4 and as much as I disagree often with the burdens
5 claimed by the supermarket industry, particularly
6 their opposition to the minimum wage increases, I
7 think, you know, ah, as much as I disagree with their
8 claims feels unconstitutional, it is a claim that
9 doesn't make sense to put the burden on the
10 supermarket industry to sort of force nonprofit
11 groups to take the pickups. The larger groups won't
12 take the pickups because it's not big enough. The
13 smaller groups don't have the resources to take, ah,
14 the, the pickups, and it would have to be far more
15 frequently than once a month. If you do want to do
16 this [inaudible] say make a minimum of at least 100
17 or 200 pounds and if, ah, people are gonna claim it's
18 unconstitutional on the speed side to mandate they
19 post it, then you can just tax or, or have, ah,
20 carting fees for the food that's wasted. But the way
21 it's designed now is not gonna be that helpful. I'd
22 love to work with council members and staff to figure
23 out a way that would be more helpful and to also
24 support SNAP and WIC outreach, which will have far
25 bigger, ah, ah, impact on reducing hunger in New York

2 City. I continue to thank the council for your
3 leadership on environment and hunger. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
5 we'll hear from Matt Gove, followed by Clare Mifflin,
6 followed by Kathy Nizarri.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

8 MATT GOVE: Well, ah, thanks for sticking
9 around. My name is Matt Gove. I work for Surfrider
10 Foundation. Surfrider has chapters all over the
11 country of volunteers, ah, including a chapter right
12 here in New York City. The chapters work to protect
13 our ocean and coast, ah, for all to use. Ah, today
14 I'm mostly speaking, though, from the Reusable NYC
15 Coalition. Reusable NYC is a coalition of 34
16 nonprofits and community organizations united to
17 eliminate needless waste [inaudible] created by city
18 use [inaudible]. I'm talking about [inaudible]
19 straws more. Ah, many of our organizations were
20 previously united to pass, ah, the [inaudible]
21 legislation, ah, years ago, under the banner of Bag
22 It NYC. So we've gotten Ban back together and we're,
23 we're working on some new laws. We, ah, we thank you
24 for supporting the bills being heard today. It's
25 really great to highlight, ah, really the dire need

2 for action [inaudible] our environment and, and
3 disproportionately polluting communities of color.
4 Ah, we didn't have time to, to officially review the
5 bills being heard today [inaudible] it takes, it
6 takes quite a bit of doing, but we do support the
7 concepts and applaud the council for highlighting the
8 important goals of reducing waste in New York City.
9 Ah, we are, however, officially supporting, ah, INT,
10 ah, 0936, the Straws by Request bill by, ah,
11 sponsored by Council Member Rosenthal, and INT 1775-
12 B, sponsored by Jimmy Van Bramer. 1775-B, also known
13 as the Skip the Stuff bill, would require restaurants
14 and food delivery apps and online delivery platforms
15 to provide, ah, what we're calling the stuff, single-
16 use utensils, condiments, napkins, ah, only required,
17 ah, only put those in the bag for, ah, food delivery
18 if the customer requests those things. So it's a
19 simple law that saves restaurants money and reduces
20 unnecessary waste. Both of those bills are in the
21 Committee on Consumer Affairs and Business Licensing.
22 And, ah, we ask that those bills move forward. So,
23 um, thanks for letting us speak today, Reusable NYC
24 Coalition. Ah, it is a joy to work with council
25 members to move this bills forward. Please contact

2 me, um, at M for Matt, the last name Gove, at
3 Surfrider dot org. Thanks so much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
5 we'll hear from Clare Miflin, followed by Kathy
6 Nizarri, followed by Anna Sacks.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

8 CLARE MIFLIN: Hello, I'm Clare Miflin,
9 founder of the Center for Zero Waste Design and part
10 of the Save Our Compost advocacy group. Achieving
11 zero waste in a high-density city requires a
12 comprehensive plan with space designated into the
13 urban realm, including parks, to collect, process,
14 and circulate materials for beneficial reuse.
15 Policies, infrastructure, and education are all
16 essential, but without designing the city for
17 effective logistics it will not be successful or
18 equitable. For example, say organics collection
19 becomes mandatory citywide. A 250-unit multifamily
20 building would need at least 50 of the organic brown
21 bins. In a typical building setup a resident puts
22 trash into a chute, which feeds directly into a
23 compactor and bags, reducing space and labor. You
24 can't put a small brown bin at the bottom of a chute.
25 They work for small quantities or for a luxury

3 building with sufficient space and ventilated waste
4 rooms and enough staff to set out 50 bins on the
5 sidewalk, bring them back in, wash them, return them
6 to the waste rooms. But most buildings don't have
7 enough space or labor for that. The city needs to
8 pilot alternative systems. Equipment in large
9 buildings could convert food waste to organic
10 fertilizer, reducing volume and weight by up to 90%.
11 Other pilots could serve neighborhoods like
12 Chinatown, full of walk-up apartments and ground-
13 floor retail where there is little or no space for
14 waste. Containers in the street or open spaces
15 should be piloted so organic waste can be easily
16 dropped off. These could be serviced by local micro
17 haulers and composted in parks and green spaces
18 citywide to regenerate soils and increase the city's
19 resilience. It would also improve sidewalks, reduce
20 rats, create green jobs, and support urban
21 agriculture. We're grateful for the council's
22 support for Save Our Compost budget request, which
23 includes these pilots throughout neighborhoods within
24 the city alongside other critical initiatives. Also,
25 we support the zero waste bills introduced today for
a plan by 2030 and milestones to get there. The zero

2 waste design guidelines were developed through a
3 collaborative effort with many city agencies and the
4 Center for Architect. They illustrate many design
5 strategies to reduce waste, from C&D waste to
6 providing dishwashers and food donation refrigerators
7 and food service spaces to bottle fillers in public
8 spaces to collection strategies, which would clear
9 our sidewalks from trash bags and rats. The Center
10 for Zero Waste Design stands ready to help the city
11 in convening a task force of multiple city agencies,
12 building managers, architects, and designers to pilot
13 and implement these strategies citywide, as part of a
14 larger zero waste plan, which is essential to ensure
15 every resident, student, business, porter, and reuse
16 worker can successfully help the city reached zero
17 waste by 2030. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
19 is Kathy Nizarri, followed by Anna Sacks, followed by
20 Christine Datz-Romero.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

22 KATHY NIZARRI: Thanks, Nicole. Good
23 afternoon, Chairman Reynoso and members of the
24 Sanitation Committee. I'm Kathy Nizarri of the
25 Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board. Thank you for

2 the opportunity to speak today. We commend you for
3 your hard work and [inaudible] Intros 844, 2250, and
4 2103 as important first steps from getting New York's
5 zero waste by 2030 goal on track as we emerge from
6 the pandemic. Zero waste must mean zero waste to
7 landfill and incineration, or you are trading one
8 environmental problem for another. New York recycles
9 just 18% of its waste. Another 18% is recyclables
10 wrongly sent to landfill or incinerators.

11 Compostable food scrapes comprise yet another 33.6%.
12 All told, this is nearly 70% of all city residential
13 waste. An additional unknown amount of discarded
14 material curbside could be reused if collected.

15 Converting and donating, it is necessary to
16 eventually to reach zero waste. Waste prevention and
17 reuse have been at the top of the EPA solid waste
18 hierarchy, but never supported here. New York City
19 must legislate reduction in a production and
20 consumption of single-use and other hard-to-dispose
21 of products and packaging, especially plastic.

22 Successful programs in other cities must be
23 replicated locally. We paid more than 420 million
24 dollars to bury and burn waste last year, generating
25 pollution and environmental degradation [inaudible]

2 the climate crisis. Recycling and reuse programs and
3 mandatory curbside organics can generate in some jobs
4 and other societal benefits. They must be legislated
5 now. Zero waste intersects with environmental
6 justice issues that are part of work to build an
7 equitable society. EJ communities have suffered the
8 most from destructive waste management policies,
9 exemplified by the more than 70% of our truck
10 transfer stations locally in the poor communities of
11 color. EJ must be imbedded into waste decision with
12 these communities having full participation in
13 decision-making going forward. NYCHA, home to over
14 600,000 New Yorkers has a recycling rate of just
15 1.5%. Innovation, fully involving residents, and
16 adequate funding are all crucial to address this. An
17 ongoing multipronged, motivational, [inaudible] zero
18 waste public education campaign in the media and
19 public spaces, transit stations, workplaces, and
20 apartment buildings would help New Yorkers who are
21 confused about what and how to recycle, ah, reduce,
22 reuse, recycle, and compost. NYC's 1.1 million
23 schoolchildren are powerful influences to their peers
24 and families. It is critical to expand to full
25 organics collection to all 1800 DOE schools by the

2 next school year. Enforcement needs adequate funding
3 and intelligent implementation or zero waste will not
4 succeed here.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 KATHY NIZARRI: Ah, I'll just finish up.
7 NYC must design a zero waste environment through
8 education and incentives for architects, developers,
9 building managers, and city planners using zero waste
10 design guidelines. [inaudible] is, has submitted
11 written testimony with specifics about how all of
12 this can be achieved. We look forward to working
13 with you on these goals, and thank you for your time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
15 is Anna Sacks, followed by Christine Datz-Romero.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

17 ANNA SACKS: Can you hear me?

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: We hear you.

19 ANNA SACKS: OK, great. Hi, my name is
20 Anna Sacks. I am a member of the Save Our Compost
21 Coalition. I work at [inaudible], which is a waste
22 reduction and diversion consulting firm, and I do my
23 own thing also as a trash walker, where I go through
24 waste. These are different suggestions that I have,
25 um, for how we can structure waste in New York City.

1
2 On the residential side, I think we need to right
3 size our collection dates. According to the DSNY
4 study from 2017 a third of our waste consists of
5 organics, a third consists of recyclables, and then a
6 third is this other. 6% of the other is textiles
7 actually. So why is it that on the Upper West Side I
8 have three days of trash collection and one day of
9 recycling collection, when a third of our waste is
10 organics, a third recyclable, and a third is trash,
11 quote unquote, um, even though a lot of it isn't.
12 Why don't we right size our collection days to match
13 the different waste streams, and naturally then
14 people's, um, will separate because they don't want
15 to holding onto trash if it's only be collected once
16 a week. Um, for NYCHA we, as you mentioned, it's a
17 city within a city. It's the size of Atlanta. It
18 doesn't have recycling. There's no recycling going
19 on at NYCHA, or very, very little, some of it led by
20 Bridget, whom we heard from earlier. Um, they don't
21 have bins, recycling bins. If they do have recycling
22 bins please take a look at them. They're all lined
23 with black trash liners. What does that mean? If a
24 NYCHA resident correctly places cardboard and paper
25 into a bin it's not going to be recycled. It's set

2 out in a black trash bag and it's collected with the
3 trash. Look on the collection days, ah, the
4 residential recycling streams. In front of any NYCHA
5 developments, any NYCHA, um, housing, it's all trash.
6 That needs to change, and that starts with just
7 having infrastructure, having, letting residents have
8 opportunity to recycle. Um, right now we have a
9 epidemic of empty storefronts, and I think that's a
10 great opportunity to create permanent swap spots with
11 [inaudible] spots, community hubs, um, places where,
12 you know, innovation can really take place and
13 community can build. Um, I think also we, we toss as
14 a city both corporates, corporations and residents,
15 toss a lot of usable items, and I would love to see,
16 for areas that DSNY controls the waste, taking
17 control of the useful items and finding value in it.
18 So that could be collecting furniture, um, bringing
19 it somewhere that could be partnering with people who
20 would gladly like resell it. There are different
21 ways to do that. But, um, mostly the furniture
22 currently left out at the curb, it's late at night
23 and then the, the truck comes and, and picks it up,
24 and there isn't a lot of time for people to get it.
25 So I would love to see innovation there. Um, for

3 schools we right now, if you're going to school you
4 get like a salt and pepper packet, a ketchup packet,
5 ah, mustard packet, a jam packet, all these butter,
6 like all these single-use individual condiments.
7 There's really opportunity to switch to bulk
8 condiments and that would save waste and money. Um,
9 we should switch to milk fountains instead of
10 cartons, where WWF did a study and you save six times
11 as much, um, milk because with the carton there's so
12 much milk waste per student, so you'll be wasting,
13 um, six times less by switching to fountains. Um, I
14 would love to see promoting sharing tables at school.
15 Right now there's a lot of confusion at schools.
16 I've spoken to teachers and principals there. Um,
17 they don't know if they can allow students to take
18 home the food that they didn't eat. They don't know
19 if they can donate it. Um, [inaudible] clarify that
20 and promote share in schools. Um, I've also heard
21 about pouring bleach onto food, edible foot, at
22 schools that, to make sure no one can use it. That
23 practice needs to stop. Um, community composting
24 needs to be allowed in the park and it needs to stay
25 there. Um, I, I just have two more quick points.
One is enforcing the plastic bag ban. If you go to

2 D'Agostino, any D'Agostino, well, I'll be specific.

3 The one on the Upper West Side only plastic bags that
4 it's using, and this is over a year after the plastic
5 bag ban. Um, and also enforce commercial composting.

6 Please speak with the commercial haulers. None of
7 them are sending, or very few, very few are sending
8 actually composting trucks out. Please get them to

9 commit, you know, this is part of their contract,

10 this a part of their job. Have [inaudible] out

11 those, the commercial composting trucks. Um, I have

12 more ideas but this, this is, this will do. Thanks.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next

14 we'll hear from Christine Datz-Romero.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

16 CHRISTINE DATZ-ROMERO: Ah, my name is

17 Christine Datz-Romero and I am from the Lower East

18 Side Ecology Center. And I would like to thank, ah,

19 Chairperson Reynoso for holding this, ah, very

20 important, um, hearing on the eve of Earth Day. Of

21 course, ah, a lot of people testifying today. Earth

22 Day for us is every day. Um, so thank you again for

23 holding this hearing and I'm testifying, um, on

24 behalf of the Lower East Side Ecology Center and in

25 support of Intro 844, um, Intro 2050, 2250, and also,

2 ah, Intro 2103. Um, we really have to stop to
3 pretend that waste goes away just because that pile
4 of trash, ah, that we leave on our curbside is,
5 disappears magically in the morning. It goes to
6 landfills and incinerators in our current waste
7 infrastructure, disproportionately inflicts
8 environmental burdens on black and brown communities.
9 Recommitting to the goals of zero waste by 2030 to
10 landfills or incinerators will allow us to turn this
11 liability and environmental injustice into
12 responsible management of natural resources and
13 generate green jobs. Organic waste makes up 40% of
14 our waste stream and we need to develop local
15 processing capacity, but beyond our existing waste,
16 ah, water transfer, ah, treatment plants to produce
17 soil amendment that is sorely needed in our city to
18 regenerate our soils. Additionally, they need to
19 ensure that communities' composting programs will
20 continue to operate on city-owned land, including in
21 parks. I also want to briefly talk about our
22 electronic waste recycling, ah, program that we ran
23 successfully for over 18 years. Ah, it's impossible
24 to run, ah, a program like this in a high-rent, um,
25 market like New York City without support from, ah,

2 from the government and we had a very, ah, successful
3 program. We diverted over a million pounds of, ah,
4 electronics out of the waste stream each year and
5 found very creative ways of also reusing some of this
6 material and, ah, unfortunately, um, in the Gowanus
7 area redevelopment happened. A developer bought our
8 site and didn't renew our lease and, ah, the
9 economics of renting something right now for this
10 program was just not there. And I would really like
11 to call on the city to also provide space for
12 programs like this so they can happen here in the
13 city. They are, um, being praised by the community.
14 They provide a lot of added-on value. They are
15 educational and they need to happen to reach our
16 goals. Thank you so much.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I see one
18 hand raised. But if we have inadvertently left
19 anyone out who had registered to testify and have yet
20 to be called please use the Zoom raise hand function
21 and you will be called in the order that your hand
22 has been raised. So next we'll hear from Meredith
23 Danberg-Ficarelli.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: The clock is ready.

2 MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: Thank you.

3 Um, good afternoon. My name is Meredith Danberg-
4 Ficarelli and I am the director of Common Ground
5 Compost, LLC, a member of the Save Our Compost
6 Coalition, a member of the Manhattan Solid Waste
7 Advisory Board, and a board member of the US
8 Composting Council. Through my work I build zero
9 waste programs, advocate for the expansion of access
10 to waste reduction services, and center education on
11 materials, literacy, the power of individual
12 behavioral change, and the recognition that all
13 people must demand structural change in order to
14 build a livable and just future for all. We support
15 a citywide zero waste policy from the perspective
16 that NYC has an opportunity to live the example that
17 it claims to set. Most New Yorkers did not
18 participate in voluntary waste diversion programs
19 when they existed. 2020's global reset and the
20 forced restructuring of our budgets must be leveraged
21 to build a new strategy. Climate-resilient
22 infrastructure requires significant upfront
23 investment to provide long-term services and
24 benefits. Waste infrastructure alongside our energy
25 grid and water supply must be reimaged and all

3 levels of government must recognize that now is the
4 time to find the funds to build what our future
5 needs. We cannot wait. Local waste diversion will
6 save money over time compared to landfill and
7 incineration costs, but simple economics must not be
8 the only variable in this equation. Waste
9 infrastructure disproportionately harms chronically
10 disenfranchised communities and we must fund and
11 build while dismantling that harm. Waste diversion
12 programs and education should be at the core of the
13 city's zero waste strategy. To get there, we must
14 identify and analyze all costs associated with
15 current waste management operations, including
16 institutional, residential, and commercial systems,
17 and identify alternative uses for what is likely more
18 than a billion dollars a year only in waste export
19 costs. I want to thank all the zero waste advocates,
20 experts, students, supportive elected and appointed
21 officials, and trash enthusiasts who are building
22 momentum and continuing to fight for waste diversion.
23 Our future depends on all of us holding our
24 representatives to the task of letting us build the
25 economy that we want to see and your voices matter.
Thank you for your time.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Um,
3 seeing no other hands raised, Chair, I'll turn it
4 back over to you for any closing remarks.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Well, I just want
6 to thank, um, everybody that's testified today. Um,
7 if the administration had the same commitment and
8 rigor that the folks on, um, on this Zoom have, um,
9 we would have been far and above and probably early
10 on our way to zero waste by 2030. Um, I also want to
11 thank the young people that took time out of their
12 day from school or from wherever they are to come to
13 this, ah, long hearing to testify. I think, um,
14 showing what the future looks like might also
15 motivate the administration to know that it's
16 inevitable that we will reach zero waste, um, whether
17 or not they're, they think it's gonna happen on their
18 timeline. Um, and this might, might be the last time
19 we talk about zero waste in my tenure as chair of
20 Sanitation, possibly, ah, and I just want to say I
21 thank you all for like all the work that we've done,
22 um, in, in this fight together for trash, ah, over
23 the last seven-and-a-half years. I do want to thank
24 the DSNY. Um, I want to say that if you ever met any
25 of these folks in the Department of Sanitation on

2 policy and things like that, that it's, ah, it's,
3 their, their commit is remarkable. I'm not saying
4 we're not having any more hearings, I'm just saying,
5 um, forcing their hand, outside of a vote, which can
6 be the next hearing, a vote for these bills, would be
7 the next time we talk about zero waste. We have a
8 lot more work to do on other things and ensuring that
9 we have the commercial waste zones actual up and
10 running. It's gonna be very important. We have
11 budget hearings coming up over the next couple of
12 months. We've got a lot of priorities to, to get to.
13 But, um, I want to thank you all, ah, for being here
14 with me and, ah, with that this meeting is adjourned.
15 [gavel]. Peace and love.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: OK, we've ended the live
17 stream. Thank you all for coming.

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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 August 14, 2021