



**JUSTICE THROUGH
COMMUNITY POWER**

Comments of Justin Wood, Director of Organizing and Strategic Research
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
Before the City Council Sanitation Committee
Re: Intro 1075
December 18, 2018

With every international and federal report finding that we have entered a period of accelerating climate change and climate-related social crisis, it is imperative that our local government do everything in its power to reduce greenhouse emissions, including emissions from landfilling of organic waste. Thank you Public Advocate James for introducing this bill and Chair Reynoso for holding this hearing.

Intro 1075 will initiate a two-year composting pilot program in a limited number of municipal buildings across three boroughs. We would strongly prefer a more ambitious bill that goes much further toward ensuring that every New Yorker can participate in organics recycling both at home and at work, and we urge DSNY to expand organics recycling service to a larger number of municipal buildings as soon as possible.

As a pilot program, this bill is a small step in the right direction that can set the stage for a much bolder expansion of both municipal and commercial organics recycling across the City.

1. First, encouraging our huge city workforce to participate in waste diversion at work also promotes organics recycling at home. Thousands of municipal employees and New Yorkers visiting these municipal buildings can become ambassadors for organics recycling at home and across our communities.
2. By increasing the volumes of source-separated organic waste along DSNY collection routes, this measure may enable some of these routes to become more efficient and cost-effective. Both the collection and processing of organic waste via composting and anaerobic digestion also create significantly more jobs than

exporting waste to landfills or incineration, and should be viewed as a source of green job development for the NYC region.

3. Organic waste collection from municipal buildings can also serve as a model and testing ground for similar types of buildings in NYC's huge commercial sector, which lags far behind other cities in recycling. As you know, DSNY and the City Council are preparing to implement a zoned waste collection system. This historic reform of the private waste system will require private haulers to meet disposal reduction targets consistent with the City's Zero Waste goals, and provide accurate and transparent data about quantities collected and recycled.

Because the zone system will enable DSNY to have far more oversight and involvement in commercial recycling programs, comparisons between municipal buildings and commercial buildings could enable the agency to test employee education, contamination levels, and diversion rates to find best practices as both recycling programs expand.

The City's One NYC plan calls for a 90 percent reduction of disposed waste from both the DSNY-managed municipal waste stream and the commercial sector by 2030, which necessitates major growth in organics recycling participation in both sectors over the next ten years. If we face the stark reality of the climate crisis, Cities like New York will need to achieve major greenhouse gas emissions reductions across every sector, including waste management, as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, we hope the pilot program in Intro 1075 is viewed as a small but important precursor to a much larger transformation of our City's waste systems.

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