



BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT VANESSA L. GIBSON

**Testimony of Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson
New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
December 9, 2025**

Good morning Chair Abreu and the members of the Committee on Sanitation. Thank you for convening this important hearing today regarding the City's draft Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). This is an important opportunity to examine the next ten years of how our city produces, transports, and disposes of the more than 13 million tons of solid waste we generate each year.

Historically, The Bronx has been one of the hardest hit parts of our city when it comes to the siting of the infrastructure and industry associated with the handling, processing, and disposal of solid waste. The environmental effects that come with this infrastructure have had demonstrably negative effects on the health and well-being of Bronx residents. Bronx Community Districts 1 and 2 in particular have long borne the burden of handling a significant share of the city's waste, with the presence of waste transfer stations. The City must do more to ensure that The Bronx does not bear a disproportionate burden of the city's waste disposal streams.

The City must commit to expanding the marine and rail transportation options that would remove trucks from our roads and make our air cleaner and our streets safer. The 2006 SWMP planned for four marine transfer stations to accept commercial waste, enabling this material to be exported from our city by water instead of by road. This plan must be fully implemented over the coming decade.

Additionally, the City should consider siting composting facilities in each borough. By directing organic waste locally, we can reduce the miles travelled by trucks exporting this waste out of our city. In order to achieve zero-waste outcomes throughout New York City, we must do more to encourage local solutions that are both environmentally friendly and cost effective. This is especially important as organic waste collection is projected to increase over the coming years due to the rollout of the new mandate.

Across the city, including in The Bronx, one of the largest sources of waste is from construction and demolition sources, accounting for about 40% of all waste. There is significant opportunity to increase the share of this waste that is reused or recycled, including through expanding City agency use of recycled asphalt, concrete, and soil. I urge the City to collaborate with our industrial and construction businesses to determine how

best to reduce the generation of this waste as well as with the processors that handle this waste to create more expansive reuse policies. There are numerous opportunities for reuse and recycling that can keep this material out of landfills that the City must explore.

With the Commercial Waste Zones being fully rolled out in The Bronx as of November of this year, we must be cognizant of compliance among businesses and whether the program is meeting its goals of reducing truck traffic and improving environmental, health, and safety outcomes. Additional outreach and education will be important to ensure that all businesses are able to have the information they need to make informed decisions about their contracts with the selected haulers. Further, the City must continue to provide oversight of the selected commercial haulers to ensure that they are fulfilling their contracts. Additionally, DSNY must continue to monitor the success of the program to see whether it may be appropriate to recommend to the Council that modifications be made to best ensure positive outcomes.

The main way that New York City can reduce the amount of material being sent to landfills and incinerators is through increasing the share of this material that is recycled and composted. Increasing recycling and composting must be accomplished at all levels, from individuals and households to major institutions and commercial and industrial businesses.

DSNY and other city agencies should do more outreach with residential buildings and businesses to ensure that they fully understand, and are in compliance with, recycling and composting mandates. The Mayor's postponement of the residential organics collection fines will be ending in January, so buildings across our city must be prepared to fully comply with this mandate in the new year.

Furthermore, our schools and NYCHA housing developments are important avenues for increasing awareness of recycling and composting. Educating our students on the proper ways to separate the various kinds of waste will enable them to bring these lessons back to their homes. Many of our NYCHA developments are large buildings with hundreds of residents. Because of the number of residents, they generate large amounts of waste and should be a primary target for ensuring that separate streams are maintained with high compliance.

While outside of the scope of the SWMP, it should also be noted that litter and street cleanliness are important factors for how New Yorkers conceive of waste management. When residents see their streets covered in trash, they do not necessarily perceive that the city is taking sanitation seriously and therefore do not feel they need to take sanitation seriously, leading to more littering and street trash. We must have more on-street composting and recycling bins with a greater frequency of pickup of trash bins. The City must

continue to bring containerization to every block and to work with affected parties like our Business Improvement Districts. Ensuring that litter gets to the proper disposal streams is important to overall system management.

There are many more solutions that both the State and the City can introduce and implement to reduce the amount of waste that we generate. The next legislative session in Albany will likely see further discussion of expanding Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to plastic packaging waste. This will be an important goal to achieve plastic waste reduction throughout New York.

Overall, we must be cognizant of the effects that more mandates have on our residents and businesses. New York is facing an affordability crisis, and many New Yorkers are struggling, including in The Bronx. Increasing costs on business will often be passed on to consumers through higher prices. We must work to ensure that our residents do not bear increased costs associated with waste reduction. Additionally, fines for residences will often fall on homeowners and small landlords more significantly than on big property owners. The City must ensure that there is a balance between issuing violations when New Yorkers are struggling to pay for food and shelter with the goal of reducing waste. We cannot let those who are struggling the most bear these costs.

As Borough President, I will continue to collaborate with the Bronx Solid Waste Advisory Board (SWAB) to ensure that we pursue policies that benefit The Bronx and guarantee that we are part of the discussion on how to make positive change for our communities. Our residents must have more opportunities to make their voices heard regarding solid waste, and the SWAB is an ideal venue for making that happen.

I commend the Council Committee on Sanitation for your tireless efforts to ensure that our city adopts as strong a Solid Waste Management Plan as possible for the next ten years. I look forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure that environmental justice and equity remain at the center of our city's waste management strategy. Together we can ensure that we generate less waste, recycle more, and send less trash to polluting landfills and incinerators.