



TRANSFORM
DON'T TRASH NYC

ALIGN
ALLIANCE
INTEGRATED
NEW YORK

NYLPI
JUSTICE THROUGH
COMMUNITY POWER



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Hillary Wasserman 212 784 5726

hwasserman@groupgordon.com

TRASHING NEW YORK'S NEIGHBORHOODS: Report Shows New York City's Commercial Waste Transfer Stations Have Upped Their Garbage Output By More Than 500,000 Tons Per Year

(New York, NY, October 7, 2019) — New York City is undermining its major investments in solid waste and recycling infrastructure by allowing the private commercial waste industry to massively increase its reliance on trucking of commercial waste, according to a new report out today by the Transform Don't Trash NYC coalition, titled "Trashing New York's Neighborhoods."

As the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) has phased out the use of private truck-based transfer stations for residential waste, private haulers have trucked increasing amounts of commercial waste to these facilities, which are disproportionately located in low-income communities and communities of color, the report says.

The report comes as the City Council considers legislation to create an exclusive commercial waste zone system. The Commercial Waste Zone bill, Intro 1574, would enable haulers and customers to reduce and recycle far more waste cost-effectively—reducing the amount of waste dumped in New York City.

Councilmember Antonio Reynoso, who introduced the bill, said: "Communities of color, like my district in Williamsburg, have long borne the consequences that come with handling a disproportionate amount of our City's trash," said Council member Antonio Reynoso. "Advocates and I have fought tirelessly to instill equity into our City's waste processing system by limiting the amount of trash handled in overburdened districts and by advocating for export by barge rather than trucks. Data from a recent report by the Transform Don't Trash Coalition shows that our efforts are being undermined by the private carting industry's increased reliance on trucking for the export of commercial waste. A commercial waste zone system will finally instill equity into our private sanitation industry while ensuring that the industry abides by environmentally sustainable practices."

Councilmember Donovan Richards said: “This new data proves that communities of color will continue to carry the burden of sorting more and more commercial waste,” said Council Member Donovan Richards. “The city must move forward with decisive action to create a strong policy that addresses this injustice as soon as possible. Thankfully, the implementation of Waste Equity and the passage of Commercial Waste Zones can accomplish the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving the health and safety of environmental justice communities.”

Councilmember Diana Ayala said: “The commercial waste industry continues to burden environmental justice neighborhoods like East Harlem and the South Bronx with their continued reliance on trucks to haul waste. The Coalition's new report is a reminder of how desperately our city needs commercial waste zones, which will help decrease greenhouse emissions, establish better labor standards, and improve street safety,” said Council Member Diana Ayala, Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus. “It is clear that Council Member Reynoso's Commercial Waste Zones bill must be passed soon to achieve these goals and protect our communities.”

Report author Justin Wood from New York Lawyers for the Public Interest said: “These new data confirm the experiences of people living near commercial transfer stations – there are too many trucks, too much noise, and too much pollution. In addition to the Waste Equity Law, the City needs to use the Commercial Waste Zones plan as a means of reducing commercial waste and redirecting some of it to cleaner, more modern barge and rail-based facilities to reduce the burden on environmental justice communities.”

Dr. Tok Oyewole, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, said: “Increasing quantities of waste are being sent to facilities in the same few communities of color in NYC. On top of this unfair burden, these private facilities are often in violation of local and federal laws, plaguing communities with persistent smells, leachate, pest problems, idling trucks, as well as diesel truck-fueled air pollution, traffic accidents, street damage, and noise. Passage of a robust Commercial Waste Zones bill will address these injustices and tackle the climate crisis by rewarding better practices in an industry that has been unaccountable for too long.”

Angela Tovar, THE POINT CDC, said: “In the wake of the climate crisis, it is particularly critical that the City of New York move away from harmful and extractive practices and transition to a new method of commercial waste collection that zones and regulates the system and reduces the millions of vehicles miles traveled by commercial waste haulers every year. We know that a more regulated system will greatly reduce particulate matter and other ground-level pollution. In a community like Hunts Point, which is ranked one of the highest on the NYC climate vulnerability index, and a community that hosts the second-largest concentration of the waste transfer stations, this is a matter of life and death. We are calling on our leaders, The Department of Sanitation, and The Mayor to take action now.”

Leslie Velasquez, El Puente, said: "Our community needs commercial waste zones. North Brooklyn currently handles 40% of the city's total waste, with the amount of waste increasing over time. Commercial waste zones would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions from truck traffic and landfills, mitigating the effects of climate change, which hits environmental justice communities like ours first and worst. We must pass commercial waste zones, for the safety and health of our communities."

Jen Chantrtanapichate, Founder of Cleanup North Brooklyn, said: "A comprehensive commercial waste zone system is absolutely critical for New York City to reduce severe environmental impacts that contribute to the climate crisis and to provide much-needed relief for our environmental justice communities. Living in North Brooklyn for over a decade, I've witnessed firsthand how private carters pollute our air and how inequitable and unsustainable the current waste system is. From my understanding, commercial waste zones have the potential to cut truck miles driven by 58% citywide. This is essential if we are working to justly transition our city towards climate emission goals."

Sean T. Campbell, President of Teamsters Local 813 said: "Black and Brown communities where my members live were promised relief from pollution, dangerous traffic, and fumes when the Department of Sanitation built marine transfer stations and stopped relying on private transfer stations. That promise has been broken, as private carters have sent more and more commercial trash to these communities in recent years. We need a strong commercial waste zone bill to protect environmental justice communities from having to continue dealing with the impacts of everyone else's trash."

Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director, ALIGN, said: "This report shows that the amount of commercial trash being processed at private waste transfer stations in the city has shot up, and neighborhoods in North Brooklyn, the South Bronx, and Southeast Queens that are already living with the worst environmental pollution in the city are continuing to bear the burden. Environmental justice communities in these areas were supposed to see some relief with marine transfer stations, but unregulated private carting companies continue to dump in our backyards. The city has to step up and take responsibility for the millions of tons of trash that businesses in New York City are producing every year. We must build a sustainable, just system for our climate future by passing intro 1574."

-30-

Notes to editors

The full report is available at <https://nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/trashing-new-yorks-neighborhoods.pdf>

The Transform Don't Trash NYC coalition is dedicated to transforming New York City's commercial trash industry to reduce waste and pollution, foster clean and healthy communities for all New Yorkers, and create good jobs. Members include the New York

City Environmental Justice, ALIGN, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council 16 & Locals 813, 831 (the Uniformed Sanitation-men's Association), 125, 210, 445, 456, 553, and 812, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.