

Testimony in support of Intro 495

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Hi, my name is Michael Heimbinder. I'm the Founder and Executive Director of HabitatMap, a Brooklyn based environmental health justice organization.

I want to thank Councilman Reynoso and the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for inviting testimony today regarding Intro 495.

I enthusiastically endorse Intro 495. The passage of this legislation is essential to realizing the 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan's promise of borough equity and environmental justice for the community's in North Brooklyn, the South Bronx, and Southeastern Queens that today, handle more than 75% of New York City's waste. But it's not just residents of communities choking on NYC's waste stream that will benefit. Intro 1170, by promoting waste export by barge and rail rather than long haul tractor-trailer trucks, will help realize PlaNYC's mandate for a greener greater New York City, improving the environment for all New Yorkers.

At New York City's waste transfer stations, waste collection vehicles transfer their loads to tractor-trailer trucks, railcars, or marine barges for export. Because waste transfer stations are not evenly distributed throughout the City and because most waste transfer stations use tractor-trailers for export, disposing of NYC's waste generates unnecessary truck traffic and pollution. By utilizing marine transfer stations in closer proximity to collection vehicle routes, the City can alleviate environmental impacts for the whole City and in neighborhoods inundated by more than their fair share of the City's noxious infrastructure.

There are 15 waste transfer stations in North Brooklyn alone. This unrivaled concentration of waste handling facilities is the densest in the City. On an average day, 7,000 tons of garbage is hauled in and out of North Brooklyn requiring over 1,500 diesel truck trips. No community should have to deal with this.

Although Intro 495 won't eliminate all these trucks, and it won't address all the other noxious facilities and infrastructures located in the community, it will provide some modicum of relief and a promise that the garbage truck situation won't get worse than it already is.

A single barge can carry as much garbage as twenty-eight tractor-trailer trucks. By building marine transfer stations and barging New York City's garbage, the City can reduce waste related truck traffic in the City by millions of miles annually. Cutting diesel powered truck traffic will improve air quality across the city, cut carbon emissions, reduce traffic congestion, trim maintenance costs for our roads and bridges, and improve quality of life for all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.