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MAYOR DEBLASIO'S ADMINISTRATION RELEASES STUDY SUPPORTING REFORM OF NYC COMMERCIAL WASTE INDUSTRY BY USE OF COLLECTION ZONES, AS ADVOCATED FOR BY NYLPI

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest applauds the City study results and recommendations. By announcing that it will move forward with plans for a competitive zone system, New York City has acknowledged and endorsed a major reform that NYLPI and the Transform Don't Trash NYC Coalition have advocated for since 2013.

New York, NY: NYLPI and the Transform Don't Trash NYC ("TDT") coalition--comprised of labor organizations, community based organizations, and environmental justice groups--praised Mayor Bill de Blasio's plan to reform New York City's commercial sanitation industry, which was announced today in conjunction with the results of a study of the City's private carting system, which is notoriously dangerous, inefficient, and environmentally unsustainable. The study results corroborate what NYLPI and TDT have long been advocating for, that establishing commercial waste collection zones could reduce truck traffic associated with commercial waste collection by 49 to 68 percent, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 42 to 64 percent. Importantly, a commercial zone system would reduce air pollution and truck traffic in the most overburdened low-income neighborhoods, and would raise the standards in an industry that has long been engaged in a race to the bottom in terms of job quality, wages, and safety.

The study results echo several studies published by NYLPI and the TDT coalition finding that the current open-market commercial waste system generates excessive and inefficient truck traffic, is highly concentrated among a few carters, has little transparency in pricing, and prevents private carting companies from achieving efficiencies that allow investments in recycling initiatives or cleaner trucks. Today, commercial waste trucks travel over 23.1 million miles annually to collect refuse and recycling material from over 108,000 businesses.

With today's announcement, Mayor de Blasio's office has endorsed a fundamental reform of the City's commercial carting industry that will advance environmental, social equity, and public safety goals: the creation of a commercial waste collection zone system would divide the City into several rational geographic zones and select private waste carters to serve businesses within each zone through a competitive bidding process. In this type of system, the study shows, trucks would travel much less distance, resulting in far less overlapping truck traffic on commercial streets and highways. Furthermore, a reformed system will allow carters to make major investments in improving employee safety, use of "green technology", and clean fuel trucks while ensuring that small and large business customers alike receive outstanding customer service, fair prices, and better recycling services.

Zoning Will Improve Air Quality, Health and Public Safety of All New Yorkers

- The number of miles driven on local streets by garbage trucks will be reduced by 68% from 23 million miles per year to 7 million.
- Various air pollutants (such as nitrous oxide and particulate matter) emitted by diesel waste trucks will be reduced by 32-64%. These pollutants are linked to asthma, respiratory illness, and cancer. These public health problems are particularly acute in neighborhoods with heavy concentrations of diesel trucks, such as the South Bronx and North Brooklyn.
- Fewer truck miles means fewer crashes and pedestrian fatalities. Private sanitation vehicles have been found to be the most dangerous trucks on our roads, mile for mile.
- “Establishing commercial waste collection zones is an important step in New York City's initiative to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries,” said **Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives**, another NYLPI coalition partner. “Our neighborhoods already have far too much dangerous truck traffic, and the way commercial haulers currently pick up waste makes the problem much worse. We thank Mayor de Blasio for showing Vision Zero leadership by making this recommendation as part of a larger effort to make waste hauling companies' operating practices safer.”
- “Mayor de Blasio’s plan will transform commercial sanitation to protect New York City residents, workers, and businesses,” said **George Miranda, President of Teamsters Joint Council 16**, whose affiliate locals represent public and private sanitation workers in New York City, and is a TDT coalition partner. “The administration collected the data and these facts don’t lie. Today’s private sanitation industry is grossly inefficient, impacting our roads, air quality, and safety. This is the plan we need to create a private sanitation industry that New York can be proud of.”

Zoning Will Allow the City to Reduce Emissions and Move Closer to Zero Waste

- Adopting a commercial zone system would save 3.5 million gallons of diesel fuel from being consumed and spewed into our air per year.
- It will bring about 42-64% reduction in greenhouse gas (CO₂) emissions from garbage trucks.
- By ensuring that waste haulers charge transparent, low prices for recycling and garbage services, a zoned system would encourage businesses to recycle more and reduce waste going to landfills.
- By offering stability to responsible waste companies, a zoned system will create incentives and a financial environment conducive to investments in better recycling technology, organic waste processing, low-emissions vehicles, and worker training and safety.
- “Bravo to the de Blasio Administration and Commissioner Garcia for completing a study that demonstrates the multiple benefits of reforming the current commercial waste collection system. Establishing zones for the collection of commercial waste would bring order to an irrational waste network and thereby cut diesel truck pollution, curb global warming emissions and clear the streets of unnecessary truck traffic in neighborhoods across the city. Even we were surprised by the size of the anticipated traffic and pollution reductions that are anticipated by a move to a more rational

zone system. And, if implemented successfully, this could end up being one of the most significant reforms to city waste policy in years,” said **Eric A. Goldstein, New York City Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.**

A Zone System Will Improve Worker Safety and Conditions for Workers in One of the Most Unsafe Industries

- The City study conducted an analysis of available worker and traffic safety data, which indicated that crashes and other safety incidents are generally under-reported in the private carting industry, except in the case of severe injury or fatality. Most private carting crashes occurred between midnight and 6:00 AM, and employees reported in interviews that the desire for efficiency can overshadow safety concerns and incentivize workers to complete their routes as quickly as possible. Occupational Safety and Health Administration through 2011 showed that average annual days away from work were higher for private carting employees than for other businesses in New York City, although the average case rate is lower for private carters.
- **Nikki Fortunato Bas, Executive Director of Partnership for Working Families**, said of the news, “Working people and communities have been heard. Implementing this system will mean better wages and safer jobs for those who collect our waste, healthier air for our residents and less traffic for our neighborhoods. The momentum to fix our broken waste management system is spreading across the country and our most innovative cities are leading that charge.”

Zoning is A Chance for Small Businesses to Achieve More Cost Effective Waste Service

- As **NYLPI Environmental Justice Organizer Justin Wood** stated, “This unprecedented report confirms what ordinary New Yorkers have known for decades – that the commercial waste system is terribly inefficient, and that small business customers, workers, and communities are not treated equitably by the private waste industry. Most business owners are eager to cost-effectively recycle more and see less garbage on the streets, but the current ad-hoc waste system offers them very little in the way of incentives, education, and accountability on recycling and waste reduction. Lacking market leverage, small businesses also pay 38% more for garbage services than larger customers. A competitive waste zone system will ensure that all customers are treated equitably, will reward businesses for diverting waste from landfills, and will ensure that waste haulers provide the education and customer service necessary to boost our citywide recycling rate.”

See the Mayor’s full press release of the City study results here: http://www.nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Private_Carting_Press_Release_2016_16_8.pdf

Read the full results of the study here: nyc.gov/privatecarting.