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Council Member Reynoso's Waste Equity Law Has Reduced 10,000 Tons of Waste Processing Capacity Citywide

Brooklyn, New York -- Today, Council Member Antonio Reynoso and the Waste Equity Coalition announced that in its first year of implementation, the Waste Equity Law has achieved a reduction of over 10,000 tons of waste processing capacity in overburdened districts citywide. The reduction in capacity was reported in the [Department of Sanitation's first "Report on the Implementation of New York City's Waste Equity Law,"](#) and indicates that the law is achieving its desired impacts.

Passed in 2018, Council Member Reynoso's Waste Equity Bill (formerly Intro 157) sought to cap the amount of waste handled by New York City's overburdened communities. Prior to the measure's implementation, low income communities of color in North Brooklyn, the South Bronx, and Southeastern Queens processed a staggering 75% of our City's waste. The three communities this bill aided were home to 26 of the city's 38 waste transfer stations. North Brooklyn alone possessed 38% of the city's waste processing capacity.

Residents in overburdened districts are exposed to dangerous truck traffic, elevated air pollution, and hazardous environmental impacts. For Council Member Reynoso, growing up in one of these overburdened districts served as the catalyst for his efforts to reform New York City's waste processing system. Now, the Waste Equity Law is ensuring that no other neighborhood suffers the same fate as Williamsburg. It also sets a historic precedent for the fair share distribution of burdensome and polluting facilities in the City of New York.

The fight for waste equity was a long uphill battle, spanning multiple mayoral administrations. For over a decade, communities, elected officials, the Waste Equity Coalition, and local advocates toiled to pass Intro 157 as a means of bringing fairness into the waste processing system.

The DSNY's recent report indicates that in just its first year of implementation, the law has already resulted in a meaningful reduction of waste handled in neighborhoods across the city. This reduction in capacity has real, tangible benefits like cleaner air and safer streets for communities across New York City especially low-income communities of color.

“I grew up breathing the toxic air produced by trash trucks barreling through Williamsburg by the hundreds on a daily basis,” **said Council Member Antonio Reynoso.** “When I became a Council Member, I committed to ensuring the next generation would not be made victim to the same environmental racism. Today, I can firmly state that I delivered on that commitment. However, this achievement would not have been possible without the tireless advocacy of frontline environmental justice communities and environmental advocates who refused to accept anything less than the clean air we are all entitled to. As we take a moment to celebrate this victory, we must not lose sight of the significant fight that lies ahead. The COVID crisis has only further heightened the urgency to combat environmental injustice and I stand committed to continuing this work on behalf of marginalized communities across the City.”

“It is rare that we can see the positive impact of legislation so quickly, so the incredible results in just one year since the Waste Equity Law has been implemented are inspiring. The benefits of this legislation to the hardest hit communities are only beginning and it is a testament to the vision and years of hard work by advocates and my colleague Councilmember Reynoso that we are seeing the results we see in this report. There is more work to be done in the fight for environmental justice that is equitable and serves the most overburdened communities. With this bill we have a blueprint for effective reform that prioritizes communities and gets results,” **said Council Member Steve Levin.**

“When the Waste Equity Law was passed in 2018, we all hoped it would help correct environmental injustices that have persisted in New York City for far too long,” said acting Sanitation Commissioner Edward Grayson. “This report shows that while we have more to do, the law is working, and we are on the right track. I thank Council Member Reynoso and all of the advocates and activists who have fought to make this a reality,” **said Edward Grayson, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation.**

"The Waste Equity Law has brought environmental justice to the communities where private sanitation workers live and do their jobs. We have been proud to partner with the waste equity coalition, Council Member Reynoso, and the Department of Sanitation to transform our industry and cut dangerous pollution in low-income communities of color," **said Sean T. Campbell, President, Teamsters Local 813.**

"Decades of outcry, organizing and advocacy culminated in the long-awaited passage of Local Law 152, The Waste Equity Law. As the report by DSNY reveals, the law has accomplished a reduction in permitted transfer station capacity in our City's most overburdened communities -- those same communities who suffer from elevated asthma and higher COVID deaths--by more than 10,000 tons per day. This reduces polluting and dangerous truck traffic, and importantly will protect these communities from even more waste moving through their neighborhoods in the future. There is still much to be done to relieve burdens of these neighborhoods who for so many decades were our City's sacrifice zones, but we are energized to ensure that the City continues its reforms to alleviate the impact of our waste system on low-income communities and communities of color," **said Melissa Iachan, Senior Staff Attorney, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.**

“We are glad that the Waste Equity Law (LL 152) has begun to reduce the amount of refuse that can be accepted at transfer stations in North Brooklyn, the South Bronx, and Southeast Queens - environmental justice communities that have borne disproportionately high burdens and associated public health consequences for decades. We look forward to seeing the City re-committing to waste equity goals and furthering the impact of this achievement, by fully implementing the 2006 Solid Waste Management Plan and the Commercial Waste Zones Law; by removing streams that can be recycled and removed from transfer stations altogether, like organics and textiles; and by ceasing the externalization of poorly-handled refuse to communities and municipalities that have effectively been deemed disposable,” **said Tok Michelle Oyewole, Ph.D., New York City Environmental Justice Alliance.**

“Rarely does the passage of legislation have such immediate and welcome impacts for chronically overburdened neighborhoods. By slashing permitted waste capacity by over 10,000 tons, this law represents a hoped-for turning point and begins to reverse decades of dumping environmental problems in communities of color. We congratulate Councilmember Antonio Reynoso, as well as Speaker Corey Johnson and their Council colleagues for advancing this legislation, and thank the Sanitation Department, especially former Commissioner Kathryn Garcia and Acting Commissioner Edward Grayson, for overseeing its successful implementation,” **said Eric A. Goldstein, New York City Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.**

“El Puente is thrilled that the Waste Equity Law is officially being implemented and has already begun to show significant reductions of waste in overburdened neighborhoods like ours. Prior to the adoption of this law, North Brooklyn handled 40% of the city's total waste, resulting in disproportionately high levels of air pollution in our communities, and as a result, high levels of asthma and respiratory disease. This law represents a major victory for the environmental justice movement and New York City's communities of color. We applaud Councilmember Reynoso and our partners in the environmental justice movement for their tireless work in bringing equity and justice to our most vulnerable neighborhoods!,” **said Leslie Velasquez, El Puente.**

“Communities in the South Bronx have felt the real and tragic impact of being overburdened with truck traffic, air quality issues and more factors that not only affect their quality of life but also their ability to be healthy and withstand the effects of the current pandemic. As a community and organization that has been advocating for changes in the way we transport waste in our city and other EJ issues for years, we want to continue to push the dial in a positive direction by acknowledging the changes we are beginning to see, but also, by pushing to protect all communities like ours.” **Dariella Rodriguez, THE POINT CDC.**

“We are pleased to see that the Waste Equity law is beginning to have an impact, and that we are seeing a daily reduction of 660 tons of waste, that will no longer travel through Community Board 12, Queens. Our hope is that when the Commercial Waste Zone law takes effect, we can see further benefits for the residents of CB 12, especially those whose homes directly abut the waste transfer stations. These changes represent more than numbers, they represent a real improvement in the quality of our residents' lives. The civic groups, social justice organizations and residents of CB 12 that joined the fight to pass this legislation will continue to work together for environmental justice.”, **Southeast Queens Environmental Coalition.**

“The report on the implementation of the NYC Waste Equity Law gives my community hope. The hope that the air is getting cleaner, the hope that Asthma in our Southeast community was reduced and will hopefully be reduced more, the hope that the stench from the waste will be reduced and the hope that we can lead a better quality of life in our area.” **Rene Hill, Chair, Community Board 12.**

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