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Contact: ALIGN: Patrick Nevada, patrick@alignny.org, 646.866.9065

Transportation Alternatives: Marco Conner DiAquoi marco.conner@transalt.org, 347.987.1197

NYLPI: Hillary Wasserman, hwasserman@groupgordon.org 212.780.0200

Report Finds Commercial Garbage Truck Crashes and Safety Violations Have Continued to Worsen

Top NYC carters have had 85 crashes since 2018, and more than half of private sanitation trucks inspected have serious safety violations.

NEW YORK, NY - As New York City moves forward with implementation of the Commercial Waste Zones Law (Local Law 199 of 2019), a new report finds that crashes continued to increase in 2019 and 2020 - despite heightened public scrutiny of the industry . The report by safe streets and labor advocates reveals over the past two years, the largest 20 carters had 85 crashes, including two fatal crashes, in the last two years - an increase of 140% over the past six years. The new findings show that the industry is growing still more dangerous and continues to undermine the goals of the City's Vision Zero program.

The report is authored by ALIGN, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Teamsters Local 813, and Transportation Alternatives, all members of the Transform Don't Trash NYC coalition.

Private carters have also routinely failed government safety inspections of their trucks. During inspections in the last two years, 52% of trucks at the top haulers were taken out of service because they were deemed too unsafe to drive - more than double the national average for such severe violations. Faulty brakes and lighting systems were among the most common violations.

“Just last weekend a private sanitation worker was severely injured while doing his job. The Commercial Waste Zones system cannot be implemented soon enough” said **City Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Chair of the Committee on Sanitation**. “We continue to witness the tragic consequences that result from the limited regulation of the private sanitation industry and deteriorating street safety. The data outlined in this report is all the more appalling because it occurred during a period when the City was actively scrutinizing the practices of the industry. I want to thank the advocacy community for continuing to shine a light on these issues and I look forward to implementing the Commercial Waste Zones system to eliminate these dangerous practices once and for all.”

"Worker rights are not a barrier to safer streets - they are an important part of the solution," said **Sean Campbell, President of Teamsters Local 813**, which represents private sanitation workers in New York City. "This weekend another worker suffered serious injuries on the job. Too often in the private sanitation industry, workers are toiling through shifts longer than 14 hours and are told to drive trucks that are not safe for the road. We want a safer industry for ourselves and everyone else traveling the streets."

"It's troubling that private garbage trucks – which have always been the most dangerous vehicles on our streets – have been involved in even more crashes despite the public spotlight on this industry, and that inspections continue to reveal serious and preventable safety violations that endanger workers and the public," said **Justin Wood, Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest**. "Our waste system doesn't need to be this dangerous. We urge the City to adopt stringent safety standards and move forward with the CWZ system immediately."

"New York City's private carting companies' dismal safety record puts us all at risk," said **Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN**. "As long as carting companies push their majority black and Latino workers to the limits and engage in a race to the bottom, this is not going to change. It's shocking that in 2021, more than half of inspected trucks are taken out of service, and that the number of crashes is continuing to rise. This year, the city must reverse this trend by implementing a Commercial Waste Zones system that will transform this industry, improve conditions for essential waste workers, and create safe streets."

"At a time when speeding and traffic fatalities on city streets are increasing, it is deeply troubling that multi-ton private garbage trucks are also getting even more dangerous," said **Danny Harris, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives**. "As New York recovers from the effects of COVID-19, the Mayor and DSNY must not only implement the strongest commercial waste collection zones but also the strongest safety standards, vehicle designs and technology, to prioritize people over profit and reach Vision Zero."

"NYC's Commercial Waste Zones Law of 2019, when fully-funded for thorough implementation, presents an opportunity to ensure that trucks and carters in the sanitation industry can adhere to standards that keep communities and workers safe. It provides a chance to incentivize a transition to renewable energy electric vehicles, as well as to promote other forms of transport (e.g. bicycles) to collect commercial waste. We urge the City and DSNY to take this opportunity to truly overhaul a system that has remained very dangerous, in terms of crashes, air pollution, and public health," said **Dr. Tok Michelle Oyewole, Policy & Communications Organizer, NYC Environmental Justice Alliance**

The Department of Sanitation is now implementing the Commercial Waste Zones Law, with an extensive RFP for private waste haulers expected to be released this spring or summer. The policy will assign carters to each of twenty zones, significantly reducing truck miles and speeds, while allowing for stronger safety standards to be imposed. Additionally, DSNY and BIC have

proposed several new safety rules for the industry which will receive a public hearing on Tuesday, April 13.

The coalition's report includes several recommendations for how the waste zone plan can be tailored to maximize street safety benefits, including:

1. Assigning a single hauler to each zone wherever possible exclusive to realize the greatest reductions in miles driven by each truck and to slow speeds.
2. Immediately adopting and enforcing new rules requiring safe operating practices, in advance of the CWZ system's full implementation.
3. Incentivizing investments in safe zero-emissions vehicle design.
4. Weighing safety track records when deciding whether to allow carters to participate in the waste zone system.

The full report is available at the Transform Don't Trash NYC website [here](#).

About Transform Don't Trash NYC

Transform Don't Trash NYC is a coalition 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. For more information, please visit www.transformdonttrashnyc.org.