



New York Lawyers

for the Public Interest, Inc.

151 West 30th Street, 11th Floor

New York, NY 10001-4017

**Statement of Caroline Soussloff, NYLPI,
Regarding the Digital Fair Repair Act
May 5, 2021**

Good morning, my name is Caroline Soussloff, and I am a Legal Fellow in the Environmental Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). NYLPI works with communities across the New York City area, providing support and services to combat inequalities, injustices, and infringements on civil rights. Our Environmental Justice program has advocated and litigated on the subject of the inequities of the distribution of environmental burdens and benefits in our City for almost three decades. Thank you to Assembly Member Fahy for having us here today to comment on an important piece of legislation that would further efforts to reduce unnecessary waste.

One of the key issue areas the Environmental Justice program works on is waste equity. This refers to the equitable distribution of both the burdens and the benefits of our waste management system. It is no secret that polluting waste infrastructure, such as transfer stations, truck depots, landfills, and incinerators, have historically been located in low-income communities of color. Electronic waste is especially toxic, releasing harmful contaminants like lead, mercury, and arsenic. Any reduction in waste therefore lessens the negative environmental and public health impacts borne by these communities. NYLPI supports the Digital Fair Repair Act because, in expanding access to repairs for digital electronic equipment and promoting reuse, it would reduce the amount of electronic waste transported through and processed in environmental justice communities.

NYLPI is also interested in making it easier for those living in environmental justice communities to participate in positive waste management practices. The Digital Fair Repair Act would expand access to repairs both geographically to areas currently underserved by digital electronics manufacturers, and economically—since more competition in the digital repair industry would drive down the costs of repairs. For example, a quick Google search indicates that there are no Apple stores or Apple-authorized repairers in the borough of the Bronx, and very few in Brooklyn or Queens, as compared to Manhattan. Yet the communities of the South Bronx, North Brooklyn, and Southeast Queens bear the brunt of New York City's waste processing. This new Act would enable small local businesses to affordably service these communities.

Thank you to the Assembly Member and everyone else gathered here today for your time. We look forward to working with you to create a more equitable and sustainable waste management system.