

December 19, 2023

Dear Mayor Adams and Commissioner Tisch,

We are writing to express our disappointment with the decision to end community composting in New York City, and to ask the Administration to restore the funding needed to maintain these programs and operations. DSNY has supported the NYC Compost Project for 30 years, but in November, announced that it will defund their community composting partners with almost no notice, no consultation, or assessment of real neighborhood and environmental impacts. We join over 45,000 people who have signed a petition urging the City not to eliminate community composting.

During the City Council's Oversight Hearing on the Mayor's November Financial Plan, OMB testified that community composting is "inefficient" and claimed that the partially delayed rollout of curbside organics collection renders community composting unnecessary. Neither is true. In fact, the network of community composting organizations serve as our best asset to increase New Yorkers' participation in the curbside program and produce valuable local compost.

The community-based compost network includes GrowNYC, Big Reuse, LES Ecology Center, Earth Matter NY, New York Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden. We cannot underscore the importance of these neighborhood based sites enough, as they provide ongoing access to the hands-on education necessary for a successful citywide curbside organics program. Their accomplishments towards this work include:

Diverting Waste from Landfills: Last year, community composters diverted over 8.3 million pounds of food waste from landfills collected from organic drop-off sites at neighborhood hubs. The community composters then utilize traditional composting methods in localized small-to-mid scale organic waste processing operations. The US EPA rates composting as preferred over anaerobic digestion without beneficial reuse. DSNY must work to catalyze localized composting operations, not defund workers and undo agreements to fund and support larger organic processing sites.

Providing Compost to our Communities: Community composters produce and provide over 1.7 million pounds of compost to nourish our degraded city soils in parks, street trees, rain gardens, school gardens, green spaces, and community gardens to support urban gardening initiatives citywide. This work helps enhance NYC's urban ecology.

Creating Green Jobs: Community composters have fostered the growth of green careers rooted in nature and sustainability. The Save Our Compost Coalition estimates that 115 people will lose their jobs due to these budget cuts. While philanthropic support has provided temporary relief, there are still over 50 jobs at-risk this fiscal year and more the next. New York City can and must do more to support the growth of green jobs in the five boroughs.

Educating Youth and the Public: The NYC Compost Project workers conduct outreach and education about composting, including tabling and door-knocking, workshops, classes, and the Master Composter Certificate Program. Many of the organizations also provide youth education programs, which will be

jeopardized by these budget cuts. These organizations conduct outreach to over 225,000 New Yorkers annually to encourage and support them to compost their food waste.

In the scale of the City's annual budget, the remaining FY24 budget gap and full \$5 Million in FY25 is a drop in a very large bucket. However, this investment has an outsized impact on our Zero Waste Act goals and our ability to educate New Yorkers about sustainable practices. Please reconsider this decision and restore the cuts to community composting today.

Sincerely,



Sandy Nurse
NYC Council Member, District 37
Chair, Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
Management



Antonio Reynoso
Brooklyn Borough President



Jennifer Gutiérrez
NYC Council Member, District 34



Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President



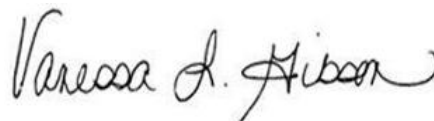
Shahana Hanif
NYC Council Member, District 39



Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President



Christopher Marte
NYC Council Member, District 1



Vanessa Gibson
Bronx Borough President



Shekar Krishnan
NYC Council Member, District 25



Rita Joseph
NYC Council Member, District 40



Tiffany Cabán
NYC Council Member, District 22



Chi Ossé
NYC Council Member, District 36



Alexa Avilés
NYC Council Member, District 38



Lincoln Restler
NYC Council Member, District 33



Eric Bottcher
NYC Council Member, District 3



Crystal Hudson
NYC Council Member, District 35



Julie Won
NYC Council Member, District 26



Carmen De La Rosa
NYC Council Member, District 10



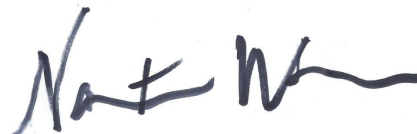
Julie Menin
NYC Council Member, District 5



Shaun Abreu
NYC Council Member, District 7



Sandra Ung
NYC Council Member, District 20



Nantasha Williams
NYC Council Member, District 27



Pierina Sanchez
NYC Council Member, District 14



Carlina Rivera
NYC Council Member, District 2



Eric Dinowits
NYC Council Member, District 11



Keith Powers
NYC Council Member, District 4



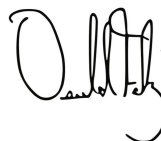
Amanda Fariás
NYC Council Member, District 18



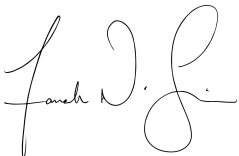
Jim Gennaro
NYC Council Member, District 24



Gale A. Brewer
NYC Council Member, District 6



Oswald Feliz
NYC Council Member, District 15



Farah N. Louis
NYC Council Member, District 45



Kristin Richardson Jordan
NYC Council Member, District 9



Mercedes Narcisse
NYC Council Member, District 46