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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 20, 2019
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MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS LANDMARK LEGISLATION TO REFORM COMMERCIAL WASTE COLLECTION INDUSTRY

New legislation caps years-long effort to create commercial waste zones, bringing environmental justice to industry and making it safer for cyclists, pedestrians, and workers

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today signed legislation that will radically overhaul the City’s commercial waste program, bringing much needed reform to an industry known for dangerous, unhealthy and unsustainable conditions. Intro 1574-A, sponsored by Council Member Antonio Reynoso, will create a safe and efficient commercial waste collection system that will advance the City’s Green New Deal and zero waste goals while providing high-quality, low-cost service to New York City businesses.

The Mayor signed the Commercial Waste Zones legislation and several other pieces of legislation overseeing the Trade Waste Industry at an event at El Puente in Williamsburg.

“Today’s bill signing doesn’t just mark a new day for commercial waste hauling,” **said Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “It’s a new day for New York’s Green New Deal, showing that we can create good-paying jobs while drastically reducing pollution and emissions. It’s a new day for working people – many of whom are immigrants chasing the American dream – ending the race to the bottom that has led to low labor standards and poor wages. It’s a new day for safety on our streets, whether you’re on the truck or biking next to it. And it’s a new day for New York City. I’d like to thank Council Member Reynoso and the City Council for helping us get to this day.”

“Today has been years in the making and is a monumental shift that will transform an industry that touches the lives of all New Yorkers,” **said Deputy Mayor Laura Anglin**. “This bill will not only lead to better paying and safer jobs for those working in the commercial waste hauling industry, but will dramatically reduce truck traffic, improve the air quality, and make our streets safer.”

“This day has been years in the making. Commercial waste zones will fundamentally transform an industry that is critical to our city and do so while protecting workers’ rights, improving safety for the public, and taking on the climate crisis,” **said Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia**. “This program will cut truck traffic by more than 50 percent and encourage businesses

to recycle and compost more. This groundbreaking legislation would not have been possible without the support of the Mayor, the work by the Council, and the tireless efforts by advocates.”

“Today’s landmark law is a big win for the environment and a real a game-changer for traffic safety and New York City’s efforts around Vision Zero,” said **Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “This year alone, we have seen three pedestrians, three cyclists, and two motorcyclists struck and killed in crashes with reckless commercial-waste vehicles. By dramatically reducing the number of truck-miles traveled, this new law will undoubtedly save lives on our streets. I congratulate the Mayor as well as Commissioners Garcia and Genel for their steadfast leadership achieving this new law, with special thanks to Councilmember Reynoso and the entire Council for seeing the effort through.”

“BIC was created to root out corruption in the trade waste industry,” said **Noah D. Genel, Commissioner and Chair of the Business Integrity Commission**. “Intro 1573-A adds safety – and particularly traffic safety – to our mandate. Now, BIC will be empowered to more closely regulate safety in the trade waste industry on the City’s streets and to consider an applicant’s safety record in making licensing decisions. Trade waste companies must prioritize safety over speed. Slow down; drive defensively; share the road. Together with Intro 1574-A and working with the Department of Sanitation and our other City and community partners in this effort, we will continue to improve this industry.”

While the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) collects trash and recycling from residents, more than 90 different private carters have crisscrossed the city each night for decades to service the city’s 100,000 commercial businesses, driving long, overlapping and unsafe routes. This system has created myriad issues for New Yorkers, whether creating public health hazards and a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, creating a race to the bottom of poor labor standards, or creating public safety risks for cyclists, pedestrians, and workers alike. Since 2010, 28 New Yorkers have been killed by private carters.

The Commercial Waste Zones program will dramatically improve safety and working conditions for workers in this industry. The law imposes training requirements for drivers, helpers and other commercial waste employees, and calls for the creation of a Safety Task Force jointly appointed by the Administration and Council to make recommendations on further steps to protect the safety of workers and the public. It also establishes a displaced worker list, promotes local hiring and includes protections for employees of certain companies undergoing merger or acquisition.

The law divides the city into 20 zones, each served by up to three carters selected through a competitive bidding process. Five carters citywide, will also be selected to collect containerized waste from dumpsters and compactors. Commercial waste zones will reduce truck traffic and mileage associated with commercial waste collection by more than 50 percent, while strengthening service standards and preserving customer choice.

The law also requires that selected haulers provide recycling and organics collection at a discount to incentivize waste diversion; promotes the use of low-emission or zero emission collection trucks; and incentivizes the use of transfer stations that use rail or barge transport or are located near the designated zones.

Following today's bill signing the City will begin program implementation, starting with formally defining the geographical boundaries of the zones. Next year, DSNY will release a request for proposals from interested and qualified waste haulers, which will be evaluated on the basis of several factors outlined in the law. DSNY expects to begin a multi-year customer transition process in 2021.

At today's ceremony, the Mayor also signed three additional bills to improve safety and oversight over the trade waste industry:

- **Intro 1573-A** expands the Business Integrity Commission's authority to establish environmental, safety and health standards for trade waste carters;
- **Intro 1083-A** imposes fines on trade waste companies that fail to report employees to BIC including a minimum of \$1,000 and maximum of \$10,000 for each unreported individual; and
- **Intro 1082-A** requires commercial waste collection trucks be equipped with global positioning systems (GPS) that can transmit data on location and speed.

"Today marks a sea change in how New York City deals with its commercial waste. Intro. No. 1574-A becoming law means that our air will be cleaner, our streets will be safer, and customer service to businesses throughout the city will be improved. The private carting industry has operated without proper safeguards concerning air quality and street safety for far too long and sprawling, inefficient collection routes have resulted in millions of excess truck miles driven every year. This law is a huge step forward in fixing this broken practice." said **Council Speaker Corey Johnson**

"Today's bill signing marks the beginning of a new era in the private carting industry," said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Chair of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management**. "Under a commercial waste zones system, vehicle miles traveled will be drastically reduced, companies will be required to provide training to workers, and haulers will be incentivized to make critical investments in modern recycling, composting, and transfer station infrastructure. The transformation of this industry will have life changing impacts for workers, community members, and our environment. I am grateful for Speaker Corey Johnson, my Council Colleagues, and the advocates who were instrumental in the passage of this bill and want to thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Garcia for their dedication in implementing this vision."

"The days of an unequitable, unsafe private trash hauling system are officially over," said **Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Committee on Environmental Protection**. "New York City is launching a fairer, healthier system for all those who live here. Commercial Waste Zones will significantly reduce truck emissions, improve street safety, and better protect workers – who right now are subjected to long, grueling shifts. I applaud my

colleague, Antonio Reynoso, for his hard work in shepherding this bill through passage and to the Mayor for signing this into law.”

“You couldn’t design a system worse than the one we have now, with overlapping and inefficient truck routes that cause unnecessary emissions, noise, traffic, and safety hazards on our local streets that have injured workers and cost lives,” said **Council Member Brad Lander**. “Creating a zoned system to limit the number of private sanitation companies operating in an area will make streets safer for pedestrians, improve working conditions for sanitation workers, and cut down on greenhouse gas emissions. Congratulations to Council Member Reynoso, and the many sanitation workers, environmental justice and safe streets advocates who have worked hard for many years to make a commercial waste zone system a reality, and thank you to Mayor de Blasio for signing it into law.”

“For nearly four decades, El Puente has fought against environmental racism and corrupt industries that valued profits over the lives and livelihoods of our communities,” said **Frances Lucerna, Co-Founder & Executive Director of El Puente**. “We support this bill that seeks to create a balance between the efficient provision of these much-needed services, the safety of those who do this back-breaking work, and an improved quality of life and environment for all New Yorkers. We applaud the undaunted leadership of our City Council Member, Antonio Reynoso, in championing this issue and achieving this victory for our community.”

“Private sanitation companies will no longer be able to treat their workers like trash,” said **Sean Campbell, President of Teamsters Local 813**. “With commercial waste zones, Mayor de Blasio, the City Council, and the Department of Sanitation are bringing oversight to this industry so that safety will be put ahead of profits. I commend the sanitation workers who fought for years to make this day possible.”

"Make no mistake: the unique coalition of labor, community, and environmental justice groups we built to pass this bill will transform the commercial waste industry from a race-to-the bottom model to one with strong labor, environmental, and safety standards," said **Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN**. "We proved that we can be bold and unafraid of making changes that address our climate crisis while creating good jobs in an industry that once was invisible to some. We thank Mayor de Blasio and the City Council for enacting this new law, and we look forward to working together on the implementation of this legislation, ensuring that it meets our progressive vision for the future of New York City."

"As a commercial waste zone system becomes the law, New York City is taking a transformative step to reduce climate emissions, improve air quality in overburdened neighborhoods, incentivize recycling and composting, make our streets safer and lift up vulnerable workers," said **Rachel Spector, Environmental Justice Program Director at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest**. "We look forward to working with the City and our coalition partners in Transform Don't Trash NYC to implement this system in a way that advances equity and creates good, green jobs."

“Following decades of advocacy, New York City’s gross inequities in solid waste handling and trucking will be meaningfully reduced through the Commercial Waste Zones Law,” said **Dr. Tok Michelle Oyewole, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance**. “The law will finally

hold responsible parties accountable for their impacts on people and the environment. We are ready for the road ahead, and will continue to work to reduce uneven burdens of the waste industry on vulnerable populations, and to more properly handle our city's outsized footprint."

"The new zoned system promises to catapult an irrational, problem-plagued waste handling system into a 21st century model of sustainability and equity," said **Eric A. Goldstein, New York City Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.**

"Neighborhoods that experienced dozens of private waste trucks racing down their streets every night will be safer, quieter and less polluted. Private waste company workers will be treated more equitably. And businesses can expect greater transparency and accountability from carters who secure zone contracts. We thank Councilmember Antonio Reynoso, Speaker Corey Johnson, and Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia for their leadership and are ready to celebrate just as soon as Mayor Bill de Blasio signs this bill into law."

"The Commercial Waste Zone Reform bill will improve New York City streets dramatically. Cities with waste zone laws, like San Francisco, have one third the rate of waste truck crashes of New York City. We thank Councilmember Reynoso, Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and Mayor de Blasio for fighting for this landmark legislation -- this is a huge step forward for safe streets, environmental justice, and workers' rights," said **Thomas DeVito, Senior Director of Advocacy at Transportation Alternatives.**

"After years of advocacy by groups across the city including Transform Don't Trash and NYLCV, New York City will finally overhaul its waste collection system. Commercial Waste Zones will make our streets safer, reduce emissions and congestion, and improve air quality for New Yorkers in all five boroughs," said **Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters.** "That's why Commercial Waste Zones was a policy priority in our NYC Policy Agenda for several years. We are especially appreciative that the final bill includes incentives for waste reduction and cleaner fleets. We commend Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Reynoso, and the City Council for taking this bold action to protect our environment. We look forward to working with the Administration and other stakeholders as this law is implemented."

"The inclusion of zero emissions micro-hauling in the New York City Commercial Waste Zones bill is a historic step towards addressing the climate crisis in a just way," said **Sandy Nurse, Executive Director, BK ROT.** "Micro-hauling creates accessible local green jobs, introduces MWBEs into the waste sector, and serves to regenerate our soils. We're looking forward to DSNY's investment in more local organics processing facilities, which will grow the micro-hauling sector."

"The new zone system promises to make NYC safer, less congested and more environmentally responsible," said **Kathryn Wylde, President and CEO, Partnership for New York City.** "Kathryn Garcia and Council member Anthony Reynoso did a great job reconciling diverse interests to come up with an excellent plan."

"Commercial waste zones will transform commercial waste collection yielding benefits for all New Yorkers, current and future," said **Andrew Rein, President of the Citizens Budget Commission.** "We are pleased this reform CBC recommended in 2014 has been enacted since

the zones will increase collection efficiency and yield environmental benefits by reducing the miles driven by private trucks, while maintaining competition and addressing shortcomings in the industry's safety and labor standards.”

“The law signed today will help create a waste collection system that provides high-quality service to customers while also building a greener, less-congested city,” said **James Whelan, President of The Real Estate Board of New York**. “Today’s bill signing sets an ambitious new bar for critical safety, labor, and environmental standards that our commercial waste collection system has long lacked. We look forward to working with all stakeholders as this program is implemented to ensure these goals are realized. We especially want to thank Mayor de Blasio, Sanitation Commissioner Garcia, and City Council Sanitation Chair Reynoso for their committed leadership throughout this process.”

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