

**Testimony of  
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**Hearing before the New York City Council  
Committee on Small Business**

**Thursday, June 25, 2025 1:00 P.M.**

**Oversight Hearing: Containerization Requirements on Business Improvement Districts**

Good afternoon, Chair Feliz and members of the Committee on Small Business. I am Joshua Goodman, Deputy Commissioner, Public Affairs & Customer Experience at the New York City Department of Sanitation, and I am joined by Haris Khan, Chief of Staff at the New York City Department of Small Business Services.

In October 2022, the Adams administration kicked off the Trash Revolution by changing set-out times for both residential and commercial waste from 4:00 PM, one of the earliest set-out times in the country, to 8:00 PM effective April 2023, while also allowing earlier set-out if the material is in a container. This incentive of containerization was paired with major changes to DSNY operations, picking up more of the trash far earlier, including ending a practice by which up to one fifth of trash had been left out for a full day.

Just over one year ago, container rules went into effect for all businesses of every type in New York City, requiring them to get their trash off the streets and into a secure bin. We wrote 70,000 warnings to businesses as this rule went into effect, and have written tens of thousands of summonses since, gaining broad compliance and bringing bins to restaurants, delis, bodegas, drug stores, boutiques, and everything else on our commercial corridors. This is millions of pounds of trash off our streets.

The first containerization requirement for residential buildings in more than 50 years went into effect November 12, requiring all buildings with 1-9 residential units to use bins. This can be either their own, or the official NYC Bin, the cheapest high-quality bin available. This program was designed thoughtfully so that these bins would be by far the cheapest of their quality on the market at around \$50, a reasonable responsibility for most New York City property owners.

To date, New Yorkers have purchased over 800,000 of these bins at [www.bins.nyc](http://www.bins.nyc) or at NYC Home Depot locations, and they have fundamentally altered the look and feel of our streets, replacing piles of black trash bags that attracted the rats, impeded pedestrians, and generally made New Yorkers feel that no one cared about their neighborhoods. These bins may look like simple pieces of plastic, but they have led to double digit percentage decreases in rat sightings citywide. Starting June 2026, this will be the only bin permitted for lower-density residential trash, to facilitate safer, cleaner mechanized collection.

That gets us to 70% of trash already covered by containerization requirements, and we have a plan for the remaining 30%. We are currently collecting trash from 1,100 stationary on-street containers called Empire Bins in Manhattan Community District 9 as part of the first full-district containerization pilot. The pilot has taken those huge piles of trash bags generated by the largest buildings off the streets and, instead, is storing them in secure containers just like you would see in Europe, South America, or Asia, years faster than anyone thought possible.

Many New Yorkers hate two things: the rats, and change, and these programs have tested which they hate more. With every step of this process – the change in setout times, the commercial containerization requirements and the residential containerization requirements – we were met with similar reactions: Segments of the population told us they broadly supported the concept of containerization, but they themselves could not containerize their trash for various reasons. There were excuses from many people and squeaks from many rats.

This administration, however, remained committed to getting every single bag of trash off our sidewalks. We knew that all New Yorkers deserved clean streets and sidewalks, not just some. And we knew that so many cities around the world solved this problem decades ago, without exceptions or carveouts.

That brings us to the issue we are discussing today. Earlier this year, after extremely lengthy community discussion, the city adopted a rule clarifying that any Business Improvement District, merchant association, neighborhood association, or other entity that performs cleaning services may not place any amount of refuse or recycling next to or against any public litter basket. Despite what you may have heard, the idea is simple: residents and businesses can't put bags right on the street. This rule simply holds BIDs and other similar entities to the same standard.

We appreciate the essential work that Business Improvement Districts and other entities perform, delivering services and improvements above and beyond those typically provided by the city, including street cleaning and maintenance, marketing and events, and beautification and advocacy. BIDs help to brand their districts and market small businesses on their corridor. They also provide a collective voice for the neighborhood and help inform city policy based on their unique local knowledge.

Over the course of one-on-one meetings with 66 of the City's 77 BIDs, as well as multiple meetings with the BID Association and with supplemental service providers like ACE, we have helped these entities to identify multiple options to comply with this rule: Compliance could look like an on-street container for a mid-sized BID, an extra litter basket for a smaller one, or direct trucking to a Sanitation garage for a large BID.

These meetings have been extremely productive and effective. For example, prior to a walkthrough, the Fordham BID expressed significant concerns about ability to comply with this policy, but by working together, we identified 19 appropriate locations for containers, and they will be placing orders soon. Our team helped the Bayside BID to determine that they can comply by simply adding about a dozen extra high-quality corner litter baskets. And the Flatbush Avenue BID has been able to revise their cost estimates down considerably thanks to our collaboration.

I want to be very clear: there are a number of low- or no-cost options for many organizations to comply with this rule, and despite the August 1 effective date, we will not be summoning anyone through at least the end of this calendar year. The implementation of the rule has already been extended well over 12 months from the date initially proposed by DSNY.

We are working with all BIDs in good faith, and many critics have come to see the importance of this program. New Yorkers deserve clean streets. Neither businesses, nor residents nor any other entity should be allowed to leave bags of trash on the street. Other cities around the world have been doing this for decades – we are certainly not the first. We can have clean sidewalks, clear corners, and passable curb cuts. We really can, if we just see this through to the end.

Thank you, and we look forward to answering your questions.