

**Testimony of  
Gregory P. Anderson, Commissioner  
New York City Department of Sanitation**

**Hearing before the New York City Council  
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management  
Tuesday, May 19, 2026 1:00 P.M.**

**Oversight Hearing: Street Cleanliness**

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Good afternoon Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management. I am Gregory Anderson, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation, and I am joined today by Chief of Department Anthony Pennolino and by Rebecca Kriegman, Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Planning.

Every New Yorker deserves not just a clean street, but a clean city. For decades, public space cleaning programs have been a bureaucratic patchwork, with confusing responsibilities that facilitated finger-pointing and inaction. As with so many other issues, the Mamdani administration is rejecting this status quo, and as part of the New Era for New York City, the Department of Sanitation (“DSNY”) is taking an expansive view of what it means to keep this city clean.

It isn’t just about emptying litter baskets more frequently or clearing dump-outs more quickly or enforcing our cleanliness laws more effectively. It’s about understanding that every part of this city is impacted by sanitation issues and services, from street sweeping to enforcement to public education.

In the coming years, the members of this Council and the people of your districts will see that change, will feel it, *will even smell it*, as we bring equitable cleaning resources to every part of the five boroughs.

We need New Yorkers to be our partners in this effort — to keep their property clean, to pick up after their dogs, to throw their trash in the litter basket. And largely, they do.

However, I need to address one area where many New Yorkers often do not do their part, and where our hands are very much tied.

The street sweeper is among our most effective tools for keeping streets clean, picking up as much as 1,500 pounds of trash, leaves and street debris in a single shift. And they are out across our city six days a week.

Street cleaning regulations, known as “Alternate Side Parking” or “ASP,” exist to give our street sweepers access to the curb. For 90 minutes once or twice a week, regulations require drivers to move their cars to allow our street sweepers to do their jobs. If you take a look around neighborhoods across the city, you will see that unfortunately, far too many New Yorkers who

own cars have become accustomed to disregarding these basic rules and leaving their personal property occupying valuable public space, creating dirty streets in the process.

Simply put, the current system is broken.

The risk of enforcement, done manually by Sanitation Supervisors and Traffic Enforcement Agents, is minimal. The price of non-compliance, combined with the low risk of getting caught, is a cheaper option for drivers than the opportunity cost of moving their car or paying for off-street parking. Meanwhile, good neighbors who sweep their properties and who obey ASP regulations are left angry, frustrated, even irate, when fellow drivers leave their cars on the street with no concern for the cleanliness of the neighborhood.

During a survey of 35 street cleaning routes in April, DSNY found that on average nearly 500 vehicles remained illegally parked per route. That means that on over 1,200 routes each week, nearly 500,000 cars violate street cleaning regulations and prevent us from cleaning more than 3,000 miles of streets.

To clean your neighborhoods and change the culture of filth on our streets, that must change. Last week, I was in Albany asking legislators to give New York City the authority to enforce against this practice via automated enforcement. A street sweeper camera enforcement program has passed the State Senate multiple years in a row, but stalled in the Assembly.

Our message to Albany is clear: Let. Us. Clean.

Authorizing automated enforcement by DSNY's street sweepers will lead to more reliable and consistent enforcement. This will encourage compliance and improve DSNY's access to the curb, ensuring cleaner neighborhoods.

That is not to say we want to issue more summonses. I would be thrilled if we could go through a day without issuing a single ASP summons at all. With this new program, New Yorkers will only receive a summons if they actually block the sweeper, preventing it from cleaning our streets.

And as we get better compliance and cleaner streets, we will be able to reevaluate the current street cleaning regulations—potentially reducing the frequency and duration of ASP regulations. This will lead to cleaner streets and a more convenient way for New Yorkers to do their part, benefitting all New Yorkers, from Jamaica to Jackson Heights, and from Eastchester to the East Village.

I ask every City Council member who wants cleaner streets to put their strong, vocal support behind this bill. Call your colleagues in the State legislature. Tell them to “Let Us Clean.” We thank you for your advocacy in support of this state legislation.

This hearing also includes legislation that touches on a number of topics related to street cleanliness.

Several bills seek to address the fact that far too many New Yorkers with dogs simply fail to pick up after them. This practice is *disgusting*. It is *despicable*. It is *deplorable*. To New Yorkers, I say this: if you fail to pick up after your dog, you are showing the utmost disrespect for your neighbors and the community you live in.

Speaker Menin's bill, Intro. 857, would require DSNY to install and fill dog waste bag dispensers on all public litter baskets. I am proud to share that our pilot of these dispensers is going well, with dispensers now affixed to baskets in parts of the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. In all cases, though, DSNY needs a maintenance partner — an elected official, a Business Improvement District, or a community group — to commit to refill the bags when they run out. DSNY simply does not have the resources to routinely restock the bags at any kind of scale. And what could be worse than walking your dog, expecting to find bags available and finding an empty dispenser.

Intro. 872, sponsored by Council Member Hanif, would require DSNY and DOHMH to implement a public education campaign regarding dog waste. We are eager to work with the Council to increase awareness around this issue, but, again, we do not have the resources for a broad marketing and outreach campaign.

On Chair Sanchez's bill, Intro. 906 regarding removal of dog waste, DSNY shares the Council's frustration with the repeat offenders who make certain blocks unwalkable. However, we have concerns about the practical application of this requirement if 311 complaint volumes were to increase substantially.

Intro. 883, also sponsored by Chair Sanchez, would establish an office of sidewalk and roadway café sanitation at DSNY. We agree with the Council on the importance of upholding cleanliness standards for outdoor dining setups. I'm happy to say that DSNY has a collaborative relationship with DOT around this topic, and the outdoor dining program has clear requirements regarding cleanliness and sanitation. As the Council considers expanding this program year-round, we are working with DOT and the Mayor's Office to identify additional requirements to ensure that sidewalk and roadway dining setups do not create cleanliness conditions in our commercial corridors.

On Council Member Hankerson's bill, Intro. 899 regarding construction and demolition waste, we strongly feel that this industry needs more and better regulation. Shady contractors often dump waste illegally in our parks and neighborhoods, and those who do should be severely punished. However, this is a very complicated issue, and we want to better understand the implications that new requirements will have for all construction projects, including badly needed affordable housing. We see this bill as the beginning of discussions around this important topic and look forward to working with the Council, our partner agencies, and the contractor community to develop appropriate regulations.

Council Member Gennaro's bill, Intro. 736, builds on the "Skip the Stuff" program that the Council passed several years ago. We support efforts to reduce unnecessary waste whenever and wherever possible, and we are happy to support this bill.

The last two bills have DSNY's very strong support: Intro. 31, sponsored by Council Member Abreu, and Intro. 92, sponsored by Council Member Brewer.

Intro. 31 would authorize DSNY to expand the requirement to separate compostable material to all businesses that produce food waste, fighting rats and keeping food waste out of landfills. This bill is a critical step in reducing the amount of food waste sent to landfills. It will also save businesses money, as the Commercial Waste Zones program requires carters to provide organics collection at a reduced rate compared to trash collection. We also want to ensure that the bill prioritizes the donation of edible food.

Intro. 92 undoes a grave mistake made by a prior City Council in prohibiting the use of stickers to deter drivers from violating ASP rules. We welcome any tool that will help us ensure our sweepers can effectively clean the city's streets. This bill is a great local counterpart to the state legislation I discussed earlier, which is our main focus and priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am now happy to answer any questions you have about specific cleanliness programs or needs in your districts. Together, we really can have a cleaner city – we just need to have the will to get it done.