

**NYLPI**

**JUSTICE THROUGH  
COMMUNITY POWER**

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**Comments of Justin Wood, Director of Policy of  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest  
to the Department of Sanitation on March 6, 2026  
Regarding the Proposed Rule Regarding the Eighth and Ninth Commercial  
Waste Zones in Queens West and Lower Manhattan**

Good morning, my name is Justin Wood and I am the Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). We are a founding member of the Transform Don't Trash NYC coalition, which for more than a decade has advocated for fundamental reform of the city's sprawling commercial waste system. We offer the following comments on proposed rules that would set a timeline for implementation of two additional commercial waste zones in Midtown South and Staten Island.

**1. We continue to strongly support the rapid implementation of Local Law 199 of 2019, mandating a citywide transition to a zoned commercial waste system.** The clear intent of this law is to make the current inefficient, dangerous, and polluting commercial waste system far more transparent, accountable, efficient, and safe while giving the City the tools it needs to sharply incentivize reductions in the vast amounts of commercial waste disposed in landfills and incinerators.

Following the implementation of the first five zones, we are supportive of DSNY's proposal to move forward with additional zones for a total of nine zones by August 31, 2026.

**2. The Eighth and Ninth Zones create opportunities to advance environmental justice and waste diversion by utilizing public infrastructure.**

We stress that the Midtown South zone is near the East 91<sup>st</sup> Street Marine Transfer Station (MTS), and that CWZ awardees serving Manhattan customers could operate more efficient collection routes and reduce fuel, tolls, and labor costs by utilizing the MTS instead of driving to private transfer stations in outer borough environmental justice communities.

This and DSNY's other state-of-the-art facilities were designed to accept commercial waste during overnight hours as part of the current Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). We urge DSNY to expedite a study of the competitive price and any subsidies necessary to incentivize haulers to use this facility as envisioned in the SWMP, and to partner with Manhattan awardees to pilot commercial use of the MTS as soon as possible.

Similarly, the Staten Island zone contains DSNY's Fresh Kills compost facility and a DSNY rail transfer station. These centrally located facilities could be efficiently utilized by awardees to efficiently process commercial organic waste and refuse, support commercial waste diversion programs, and reduce local diesel truck miles and associated costs.

### **3. The rollout of new zones should emphasize commercial waste diversion strategies and support for small business customers.**

The Commercial Waste Zones Annual Report published in October, 2025 included the first real-world data on VMT, quantities of waste collected for disposal and recycling, and safety violations. Consistent with prior estimates, only 26% of commercial waste collected in the first waste zone in Central Queens was separated for recycling and composting in the first phase of the new collection system, meaning that more than 74% is being trucked to landfills and incinerators.

Reducing, donating, and recycling more of the vast quantities of waste generated by New York City's diverse businesses is one of the simplest and most immediate pathways to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the high costs of New York City's solid waste disposal system.

We echo recommendations we recently published in "[A People's SWMP](#)," including:

- Passing local legislation to require all NYC businesses and haulers to follow uniform separation rules for organics and other recyclables, and synchronizing customer and public education messaging and materials across the commercial and residential sectors;
- Implementing mechanisms to incentivize CWZ awardees to partner with customers to implement robust waste reduction and recycling programs including food donation, food rescue, and organic waste recycling programs;
- Expediting completion of a commercial waste characterization study to better enable DSNY's enforcement personnel, awardees, and specialized subcontractors in each zone to target customer education, programming, and waste reduction services to maximize diversion.

CWZ implementation will also enable the waste industry to accelerate the major investments needed in organics recycling facilities, modern trucks, customer service infrastructure, and community-level services to achieve the goals of Local Law 199, the Zero Waste Act and the New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

### **3. Increase Transparency as the CWZ Program Expands.**

The CWZ system is generating unprecedented data on collection routes, driving practices, and the quantities and types of waste being collected, recycled, and disposed by the commercial system. As implementation continues, we urge the Department to publish and regularly update a CWZ data dashboard to evaluate progress toward the goals of Local Law 199 in each zone and citywide.

The public, customers, and various CWZ stakeholders should also be able to access each awardee's waste diversion plans, customer education plans, VMT reduction plans, prices, and the names and qualifications of all subcontractors, transfer stations, recycling facilities, and micro-haulers that the designated haulers intend to utilize to service the zone.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on these proposed rules. We hope to work in partnership with DSNY, the City Council, Borough Presidents, and the many community and business stakeholders to ensure that this innovative new system reaches its envisioned transformational potential.

Sincerely,

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*For 50 years, NYLPI has fought to protect civil rights and achieve lived equality for communities in need. Led by community priorities, we pursue health, immigrant, disability, and environmental justice. NYLPI combines the power of law, organizing, and the private bar to make lasting change where it's needed most. Our Environmental Justice Program works to eliminate the unfair burden of environmental hazards borne by low-income communities and communities of color and seeks to create a more equitable and sustainable city.*

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**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
New York City Department of Sanitation  
DSNY Proposed Implementation Dates for Eighth and Ninth Commercial Waste Zones  
March 5, 2026**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

NYLCV strongly supported the passage of Local Law 199 of 2019, establishing the City's first Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) program. Championed by a wide group of stakeholders, this law will overhaul the City's antiquated and inefficient commercial waste management system by dividing the City into 20 zones, limiting each zone to a maximum of three of private sanitation companies and five carters to provide containerized commercial waste collection services from dumpsters and compactors citywide, all selected through a competitive bid process ("awardees"). The resulting contracts with the awardees include standards for pricing, customer service, safety, environmental health, and requirements to promote the City's commitment to recycling and sustainability.

**NYLCV supports DSNY's proposed rules and the implementation start date and final implementation date for the next two CWZs: Midtown South and Staten Island, both starting on July 1, 2026.** While we understand that Queens West implementation start and finish date has been removed, we hope it moves forward as soon as practicable.

**We stand [with advocates](#) calling on DSNY to release an implementation timeline for the entire CWZs system by the end of 2026.** We hope the City will dedicate the requisite amount of resources and funding for staffing, education, and outreach to fully implement the CWZ law.

NYLCV urges DSNY to continue working towards transitioning to zero-emission vehicles for DSNY and commercial sanitation trucks. Additionally, the City must continue working with DCAS, utility companies, and industry professionals to ensure adequate charging infrastructure is installed and available for sanitation trucks and give extra consideration for CWZ carters with the most aggressive plans to do so. Requiring cleaner fleets as part of the City's move to CWZs is also the best way to bring measurable air quality improvements to neighborhoods that house a disproportionately high number of haulers and waste processing facilities. It is not good enough to require citywide emissions reductions. We should also strive for more localized

benefits. Lastly, we urge the next Administration to work with the City Council in expanding commercial organics separation requirements to all food businesses by the end of 2026.

The CWZ law will bring the city closer to its zero waste goals and improve the safety of workers, pedestrians, and cyclists. It will also cut down on traffic congestion, improve air quality, and curb the city's tailpipe pollution and carbon emissions, which is especially important in low-income communities and communities of color. NYLCV looks forward to seeing the timely implementation of this law citywide so all New Yorkers have the chance to breathe a little easier.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

## Badea, Anissa

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**From:** Badea, Anissa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 10:16 AM  
**To:** Badea, Anissa  
**Subject:** FW: Comments on Proposed Rule – DSNY-55 (CWZ Implementation & Infrequent Waste Generators)

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**From:** Morano, Frank <[FMorano@council.nyc.gov](mailto:FMorano@council.nyc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 14, 2026 5:01 PM  
**To:** NYC Rules (DSNY) <[nycrules@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:nycrules@dsny.nyc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Comments on Proposed Rule – DSNY-55 (CWZ Implementation & Infrequent Waste Generators)

You don't often get email from [fmorano@council.nyc.gov](mailto:fmorano@council.nyc.gov). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Commissioner and Members of the Bureau of Legal Affairs,

I submit these comments regarding the Department of Sanitation's proposed rule entitled "**Amendment of Rules Relating to the Implementation of the Eighth and Ninth Commercial Waste Zones and Infrequent Waste Generators**" (Reference No. DSNY-55).

I appreciate the Department's ongoing efforts to implement the Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ) program in a manner that improves safety, reliability, and environmental outcomes while providing predictability for businesses. I offer the following comments to ensure a smooth and equitable rollout, particularly as it relates to Staten Island and small commercial establishments.

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### 1. Staten Island CWZ Implementation Timeline

The proposed rule establishes **July 1, 2026** as the implementation start date and **August 31, 2026** as the final implementation date for the Staten Island Commercial Waste Zone.

While I recognize the need for a clear and enforceable schedule, I respectfully urge DSNY to ensure that Staten Island businesses receive **robust, early, and repeated outreach well in advance of July 1, 2026**, including:

- Clear notice of required actions by affected businesses
- Plain-language explanations of how service transitions will occur
- Targeted communication to small businesses, professional offices, and mixed-use properties

Given Staten Island's unique commercial geography and smaller business base, a successful transition will depend heavily on education and coordination rather than enforcement alone.

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### 2. Enforcement Discretion and Grace Periods

I encourage DSNY to explicitly apply an **education-first and enforcement-light approach** during the initial phase of Staten Island implementation.

In particular, I request that the Department:

- Avoid “gotcha” enforcement during early implementation
- Provide clear written guidance on any grace periods
- Prioritize compliance assistance before penalties

This will help ensure that well-intentioned businesses are not penalized for confusion during a major system change.

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### **3. Application Requirement for Infrequent Waste Generators**

The proposed rule introduces an application and potential recertification requirement for businesses that qualify as generators of infrequent or insignificant amounts of waste.

While I understand the Department’s desire for administrative clarity, I respectfully note the following concerns:

- Many infrequent-waste businesses are **micro-businesses**, home-based operations, appointment-only offices, or seasonal establishments
- The paperwork and recertification process should not impose a burden disproportionate to the minimal amount of waste generated
- Any application process should be **simple, fast, free, and easily accessible online**, with minimal documentation requirements

I strongly encourage DSNY to design this process in a way that ensures the administrative burden does not exceed the regulatory benefit.

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### **4. Periodic Recertification**

The rule permits DSNY to require periodic recertification of infrequent waste status. I respectfully request clarity on:

- How frequently recertification would be required
- Whether recertification would be automatic absent a material change
- Whether businesses would receive advance notice before losing exempt status

Clear standards and predictable timelines will be essential to avoid confusion and inadvertent non-compliance.

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### **5. Ongoing Communication With Elected Officials**

Finally, I encourage DSNY to maintain regular communication with elected officials representing districts entering future CWZ phases, particularly Staten Island, so that constituent concerns can be addressed proactively rather than reactively.

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**Conclusion**

These comments are offered in the spirit of constructive engagement. With thoughtful outreach, reasonable enforcement discretion, and streamlined administrative processes, the Staten Island CWZ rollout can be implemented in a way that supports environmental goals while respecting the realities faced by small businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

**Frank Morano**

New York City Council Member

Staten Island – 51st District