



Increasing Good Jobs, Recycling, and Justice in the Commercial Waste Industry

All New Yorkers want to live and work in safe, healthy communities. New York City has taken steps in recent years to build the cleaner, more sustainable city we all want. Unfortunately, commercial waste continues to cause problems for local communities and workers, as well as the local environment, economy, and the city's long-term sustainability.

The Problem

New York City's restaurants, offices, and businesses generate a staggering **5.5 million tons of commercial solid waste** each year. The system in place to handle all of that waste is fraught with problems:

- > **Inefficient commercial waste collection is costly and polluting.** Hundreds of companies deploy thousands of dirty trucks to service customers along crisscrossing routes, needlessly wearing down roads and emitting pollution that damages truck drivers' and residents' health.



- > **Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately burdened by solid waste handling.** The vast majority of waste handled in New York City is transported by heavy trucks to and from waste transfer stations in a handful of low-income communities and communities of color.
- > **Private sector waste workers face low wages and poor working conditions.** Many workers in the commercial sector are paid poverty wages and lack benefits and full-time, permanent employment status. Waste work is amongst the most dangerous in the nation, ranked in the top ten deadliest occupations.
- > **Landfilling and incinerating waste is costly and polluting.** 90% of New York City's commercial waste could be recycled or composted, but the vast majority now ends up in landfills and incinerators.



- > **Small businesses are disadvantaged by the current system.** While large corporations can negotiate with carters to lower prices, small businesses often lack this leverage. Carters don't publish their prices, so businesses have trouble comparison shopping and negotiating a fair price. Private carters often charge a flat monthly price, which is not directly linked to the amount of waste generated, and doesn't reward businesses for recycling or composting more. If there are problems with customer service, small businesses are left to fend for themselves or select a new carter because of lax oversight of the industry.

The Solution

New York City can do better. The City should enact high-road labor standards, environmental standards, and establish accountability mechanisms in the commercial waste industry.

Environmental Standards



- **Diversion Goal:** A commercial waste diversion goal and a requirement that private waste companies operating in the city develop and execute plans to meet it.
- **Clean Trucks:** Vehicle emissions standards for commercial waste trucks.
- **Smart Routing:** Designated truck routes that minimize waste truck miles traveled.

Labor Standards



- **Wage Standards:** Livable wages for private hauling and waste and recycling facility workers.
- **Safety Standards:** First-rate safety training and equipment for private hauling and waste and recycling facility workers.

Accountability Mechanisms



- **Reporting:** Reporting requirements for private haulers and waste and recycling facilities that ensure compliance with high-road environmental and labor standards.
- **Increased Enforcement:** Regular inspections and audits by the City.
- **Fair and Standardized Hauling Rates:** A single rate structure that ensures all hauling customers pay the same rate for the same level of service, and that incentivizes recycling and composting.

What You Can Do to Help

Join the Transform Don't Trash NYC campaign:

- > **Endorse the campaign.** Add your business to the growing number of organizations that support increasing good jobs, recycling and justice in the commercial waste industry.
- > **Visit transformdontrashnyc.org** and **sign the petition** to tell the City: Raise NYC's dismal recycling rate and create 15,000 jobs. When you sign the petition, you'll also receive future updates about the campaign and how you can take action.

About Us

Transform Don't Trash NYC is a growing coalition dedicated to transforming New York City's commercial trash industry to reduce waste and pollution, foster clean and healthy communities for all New Yorkers, and create good jobs.

Endorsing organizations include: ALIGN, American Lung Association of the Northeast, Good Jobs NY, International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council 16 & Locals 813, 831 and 210, New York City Central Labor Council, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (and its member organizations El Puente, Morningside Heights/West Harlem Sanitation Coalition, Nos Quedamos, The Point, Sustainable South Bronx, UPROSE, and Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice), New York Communities for Change, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, the Pratt Center for Community Development, Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, and WE ACT for Environmental Justice.

For more information and to get involved, visit transformdontrashnyc.org or email contact@transformdontrashnyc.org.