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City Council Sanitation Committee Chair Antonio Reynoso, City Council Members, the Council's Progressive Caucus, and labor and environmental advocates call for the passage of Intro 157, the Waste Equity Bill.

New York, NY—Today, Council Member Antonio Reynoso joined fellow New York City Council and Progressive Caucus colleagues, Teamsters Local 813, and advocacy organizations at a press conference at City Hall to call for the passage of Intro. 157, a bill that would cap the amount of waste handled by overburdened communities. The legislation is scheduled to be voted on after the press conference at the Council's regularly scheduled Stated Meeting.

Low income communities of color currently handle a staggeringly disproportionate amount of our City's waste. The three communities this bill targets (North Brooklyn, South Bronx, and Southeast Queens) are home to 26 of the City's 38 waste transfer stations. North Brooklyn alone possesses 38% of the City's waste processing capacity.

Residents in these districts are exposed to dangerous truck traffic, elevated air pollution, and hazardous environmental impacts. The effects are apparent—residents have to dodge trucks tearing down their streets and suffer from some of the highest asthma rates in the nation.

To make matters worse, under the current system these overburdened communities have the permitted capacity to accept even more trash than they already do.

Since the idea of waste equity was introduced in the City's Solid Waste Management Plan over a decade ago, communities, elected officials, and advocates have fought to bring fairness to the waste processing system.

Community activists across the city have been fighting for the passage of this bill for over a decade, and the Progressive Caucus of the New York City Council has advocated for this Waste Equity legislation through its legislative agenda for two consecutive terms. After a long uphill battle, the passage of Intro 157 will finally deliver environmental justice to frontline communities and ensure that no other neighborhood suffers the same fate, while setting a historic precedent for the fair share distribution of burdensome and polluting facilities in the City of New York.

Recent news coverage has exposed the sanitation industry's mistreatment of workers, in addition to the communities where its facilities are sited. Many of the industry's workers are non-union and are paid low wages in dangerous jobs.

The passage of Intro 157 represents a first, crucial step toward reforming the City's commercial carting industry. Next month, the Department of Sanitation is expected to release its plan for zoned-collection of commercial waste, which will enact further reforms addressing inefficient routes, worker abuse, and low recycling rates.

"The passage of Intro 157 is a momentous achievement in the fight for environmental justice and the reform of our City's private waste management system," **said Council Member Antonio Reynoso, sponsor of Intro. 157.** "Currently, low-income communities of color handle a staggeringly disproportionate amount of our City's waste. Residents are exposed to dangerous truck traffic, elevated air pollution, and hazardous environmental impacts— contributing to historical inequities in resource distribution along economic and racial lines. Intro 157 will finally deliver environmental justice to frontline communities and ensure that no other neighborhood suffers the same fate, while setting a historic precedent for the fair share distribution of burdensome and polluting facilities in the City of New York. This is a first, crucial step toward reforming the City's commercial carting industry."

"This is a time of reckoning for an industry that routinely mistreats its workers and has for decades shouldered a handful of communities with the burden of processing waste for an entire city," **said Council Member Stephen Levin.** "It's time to put an end to this injustice. Int. 157 is a sensible and measured first step to bring relief to Southeast Queens, North Brooklyn, and the South Bronx. It will also protect other neighborhoods from becoming overburdened in the future as our city's population grows. I'm proud to join Speaker Johnson and Council Member Reynoso in their fight to pursue justice, protect workers, and stand firmly on the side of the people."

"In recent weeks, the reckless and negligent operations of New York City's private waste haulers have finally gotten the attention they deserve, including the awful working conditions these companies force on their largely immigrant, Latino, and Black workforce," **said Council Member Donovan Richards.** "We

as elected officials can no longer sit idly by. It is high time that we hold the private sanitation companies responsible not only for their awful practices when collecting waste, but also when dumping and processing waste. Int. 157 is the first step towards bringing true accountability to an industry in desperate need of reform. I'd like to thank Speaker Johnson and Council Member Reynoso for championing this important legislation for the communities of Southeast Queens, the South Bronx and North Brooklyn."

"For years, waste has been unevenly distributed in our city, with the majority of it passed to low-income communities," **said Council Member Keith Powers**. "Your zip code should not determine how much trash is in your neighborhood. I thank Council Members Reynoso and Levin for this legislation that looks to fairly manage waste."

"Communities of color, including one I represent, have been disproportionately impacted by waste transfer stations and the pollution they produce," **said Council Member Diana Ayala**. "The South Bronx, Southeast Queens, and North Brooklyn continue to face environmental challenges, including public health concerns, because of the lack of borough equity for handling waste. As the Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus, I am thrilled to join my colleagues in championing Introduction 157, as it will ensure borough equity is established and environmental justice is served."

"Waste is not something that just happens to a community. It is the direct result of how we decide to collect, transport, and dispose of it. Unfortunately, like so many other aspects of New York City, some communities are more overburdened with waste collection sites than others, and these communities are almost always communities of color, immigrant, or low-income. Since every New Yorker has a right to clean air, clean water, and clean streets, justice demands that we more equitably distribute our waste so that no one, through no fault of their own, is exposed to pollution and disease. This bill is a powerful step in the direction of this environmental justice," **said City Council Member Carlos Menchaca**.

"By capping the amount of waste processed in the most overburdened neighborhoods, Intro 157 will bring needed relief to low-income communities of color that have long been treated as a dumping ground for the rest of the city's garbage, and take a bold step to secure environmental justice for all New Yorkers," **said Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. "No single community should have to deal with noxious air pollution or have its quality of life compromised by the inordinate amount of waste being trucked to its streets every day. I thank Chair Reynoso, Council Member Levin, Speaker Johnson and advocates for their exemplary leadership on this legislation, which will ensure that every neighborhood does its fair share to protect our environment."

"For far too long, a handful of communities in our city have unfairly borne the brunt of our trash handling system. They have been forced to live with the air pollution, noise, and other impacts coming from the waste facilities themselves, as well as the hundreds of trucks that visit them daily. With Intro 157, we have a real opportunity to bring environmental justice to these communities, and establish a precedent for the fair share distribution of waste-handling facilities across the five boroughs. Let's pass this bill and complete what the Solid Waste Management Plan started. Thank you to Council Members Reynoso and Levin for their leadership on this critical issue," **said Council Member Helen Rosenthal**.

"Today's vote on Intro 157 is truly a watershed moment for environmental justice," said **Eddie Bautista, Executive Director, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance**. "Our communities have been fighting for relief from waste facilities and trucks traffic for decades. Finally, we will see this first critical step toward waste equity, and ensure that local communities - particularly the three most impacted - finally begin to realize some semblance of fair share."

"We don't just work in these communities, we live here too," said **George Miranda, President of Teamsters Joint Council 16**. "We know we can have clean air, environmental justice, and good jobs at the same time. The Waste Equity Bill will more fairly distribute this industry's impacts, and sets the stage for broader reforms later this summer to protect workers, increase recycling, and cut truck traffic through zoned-collection of commercial waste."

"Today, the City Council is taking action to address longstanding racial inequity in our waste system that simply shouldn't be tolerated in our city," said **Rachel Spector, Director of Environmental Justice at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest**. "Thanks to decades of organizing by impacted communities, Intro 157 will bring a measure of relief to neighborhoods overburdened by waste trucks and move the city one step closer to an equitable and less polluting waste system."

"As far back as the 1989 New York City Charter Revision, which added a "fair share" provision, city officials have recognized that some neighborhoods were bearing disproportionate environmental burdens from concentrations of waste-handling facilities. Intro 157 represents a long-awaited first step to right this wrong -- thanks to the leadership of Councilmembers Antonio Reynoso and Stephen Levin and Speaker Corey Johnson," said **Eric A. Goldstein, NYC Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council**.

"For far too long the Communities of North Brooklyn have been environmentally overburdened by processing almost 40% of New York City Solid Waste, generating unsafe conditions for our seniors and Children. Due to the amount of garbage trucks passing through our streets, we have one of the highest rates of asthma in the City of New York. Intro 157 will secure once and for all, that not only North Brooklyn, but other communities of color in New York City don't have to be burdened with a high volume of garbage coming to their communities. We applaud the leadership of the Speaker of New York City Council, Corey Johnson, and we thank Councilmembers Antonio Reynoso and Stephen Levin for their commitment to environmental justice in New York City." **Ray Kairys, Organizations United for Trash Reduction and Garbage Equity (OUTRAGE) Steering Committee Chair**

"Decades of struggling for environmental justice has brought us to this critical vote," said **Angela Tovar, Director of Community Development, THE POINT CDC**. "We hope the City Council does right by overburdened communities of color like the South Bronx and takes this small but essential step toward waste equity."

"El Puente supports Intro 157 to cut truck pollution, traffic, and noise," **Leslie Velasquez, Environmental Justice Program Manager, El Puente**. "Our community deserves protection from any more diesel-burning garbage trucks, and the city needs to more fairly distribute this environmental burden."

"Intro 157 is Responsible legislation and a collaborative effort – a compromising bill that does not say 'Not in my backyard!' but instead says 'Not ALL in my backyard!'" **said Rev. Dan Rodriguez of Waste Equity for Southeast Queens.** "The City Council have an opportunity today to ensure that all boroughs carry each other's burdens so that all involved can become better citizens of the neighborhoods in which we work, live and serve."

"Finally, the Bronx may have some relief and protection from noxious garbage and runaway truck traffic," **said Jessica Clemente, We Stay/ Nos Quedamos.** "We hope the passing of Intro 157 will help launch even more ambitious efforts to truly bring environmental justice citywide."

"I trust that the day is coming when there will be less garbage trucks spewing emissions on the streets of Southeast Queens," **said Andrea Scarborough, Community Activist - Southeast Queens.** "This affects the quality of life and the health of my neighbors. I hope that with the passage of Intro 157 a new era of environmental justice will begin for Southeast Queens."

"When you talk about who bears the brunt of our sanitation system in New York City, you have to talk about race," **said Maritza Silva Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN.** "It is Black and Latino communities that host the majority of private waste transfer stations. It is Black and Latino workers who are endangered in their operations. Today's vote is the first step toward bringing justice to this industry, and we will take several more steps when a strong commercial waste zone plan is released later this summer."

"This is bigger than New York City, this is a global issue that reaches far beyond our five boroughs," **said Dior Doward, a worker-owner at GreenFeen OrganiX.** "Passing Intro 157-C will move us closer to aligning city goals like OneNYC with the heart of the EJ movement. Workers of the Bronx must be able to take our power back through alternative economics and demand a better quality of life by achieving waste equity."

"It is the responsibility of the current generation to look out for the future generation, therefore please vote for intro 157," **said Dr. Walter R. Dogan, President of the Brinkerhoff Action Association.**

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