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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

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**Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Testimony before the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
Management
On Community Organic Waste Drop-off Sites and Recycling Centers**

My name is Gale A. Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President. Thank you to Chair Reynoso and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste for the opportunity to testify.

As co-sponsor of both Intro 1942 and Intro 1943, I fully support establishing drop-off centers for New Yorkers to recycle organic and inorganic materials in each of New York City's 59 community districts. These centers are crucial to ensure the city continues on its path towards zero waste to landfill by 2030. Moreover, siting these centers in every community will expand recycling in an equitable way, bringing the opportunity to drop off food scraps, e-waste, and textiles into districts that have not yet been served by DSNY's curbside organics collection program.

I ask members of the committee to consider the following recommendations as you work to swiftly advance the passage of both bills.

For every community district that is home to public housing, at least one of the three required community recycling centers must be sited either within a NYCHA development or at a location that can be easily accessed by NYCHA residents. Preferably, the NYCHA location would also accept food scraps. When determining where to establish drop-off centers, DSNY needs to work with NYCHA's sustainability team and with resident leadership at locations under consideration before siting decisions are finalized. And once a location that serves NYCHA residents is selected, DSNY must work with NYCHA and Resident Association leaders to develop education and outreach materials for households in all NYCHA developments in that district.

The community recycling centers can also serve as collection sites for disposing pharmaceutical waste. In 2019, the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board's (SWAB) Pharmaceutical Committee analyzed the reach of State legislation S3687/A6062, which allows retail pharmacies to register as pharmaceutical waste "Collectors" and install collection boxes to take back prescription drugs and other unused controlled substances. The SWAB found that almost no pharmacy in Manhattan had installed collection boxes, nor were the pharmacists onsite aware of

their stores' ability to do so. In fact, SWAB members could only confirm one pharmacy located near Union Square that has a collection box. With the shortage of collection opportunities outside of annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Days and periodic SAFE Disposal Events run by the city, this committee should work with DSNY and the NYS Department of Health to consider including pharmaceutical waste take-back at community recycling centers.

Finally, I want to reiterate the importance of education and outreach. New Yorkers need to know about the centers in order to participate. As the City Council continues to work out the details of the DSNY FY21 budget, there must be sufficient funding for alerting the public about community recycling centers and to encourage recycling in general.

Thank you for your support to expand recycling and organics collection throughout New York City. I look forward to continue working with you on passing Intro 1942 and Intro 1943.