



**New York City Environmental Justice Alliance testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Sanitation in Support of Intro. 495 to amend the administrative code of the city of New York in relation to reducing permitted capacity at putrescible and non-putrescible solid waste transfer stations in overburdened districts.**

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Good morning Chairperson Reynoso and Members of the City Council. My name is Eddie Bautista and I am here to testify in strong support of Intro. 495 on behalf of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA). Founded in 1991, NYC-EJA is a non-profit city-wide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers its member organizations to advocate for improved environmental conditions and against inequitable environmental burdens. Through our efforts, member organizations coalesce around specific common issues that threaten the ability of low-income and communities of color to thrive, and coordinate campaigns designed to affect City and State policies – where solid waste issues affecting these communities has been central to NYC-EJA’s work.

New York City creates roughly 35,000 tons of garbage every day. This garbage is trucked to transfer stations in a small handful of NYC neighborhoods and then trucked back out of the City. Every day, garbage trucks needlessly travel thousands of miles throughout New York City polluting our air with diesel fuel, clogging our streets, and diminishing our quality of life. These impacts are greatest in those few low-income and communities of color where old truck-dependent transfer stations are clustered, and along the truck routes used to haul garbage. Not surprisingly, these same communities deal with many sources of pollution and the negative health consequences thereof -- such as asthma, heart disease, and cancer.

Because a number of the NYC-EJA member organizations come from communities overburdened by garbage, our organization is a key advocate for the landmark Solid Waste Management Plan adopted by Mayor Bloomberg and the New York City Council in 2006. The plan articulates two central goals: 1) Green Garbage Collection to improve NYC’s air quality and quality of life by taking trucks off the street and moving garbage by barge and rail instead; and 2) Borough equity to ensure that each borough handles its fair share, and no community serves as the “dumping ground” for another.



But in order to achieve its vision the plan needs to be fully implemented, and in order do so it requires a strategy for reducing the actual garbage handled in overburdened communities. This bill provides long overdue relief for communities that handle a disproportionate amount of the City's waste. It will also ensure that no other community is mistreated like this in the future; provisions will not allow the City to issue new permit capacity in any Community District with more than 5% of the City's waste permit capacity. With the marine transfer stations system, reductions will contribute to the elimination of thousands of truck trips in the city to and from these neighborhoods.

Even though the South Bronx and North Brooklyn will continue to handle considerably more waste than other NYC communities after the bill's reductions take place, these decreases will have an important impact in these neighborhoods. There are 15 waste transfer stations in North Brooklyn permitted for over 20,000 tons of waste per day, and there are 9 waste transfer stations in the South Bronx permitted to handle nearly 12,000 tons of waste each day. The proposed bill will eliminate several hundred truck trips in and out of these communities.

These provisions represent relief for the residents of these areas who experience some of the highest levels of asthma in the country, and deserve cleaner air and streets. Moreover, the bill will also prevent current conditions at the waste transfer stations from getting worse. In targeting reductions, it will require the City to evaluate the public health impacts of a transfer station -- including proximity to homes, schools and parks, as well as the station's environmental and worker safety track record, among other factors.

NYC-EJA commends the NY City Council Committee on Sanitation for holding a hearing on this bill, creating an opportunity for public comment on this important milestone toward the implementation of the City's Solid Waste Management Plan, and urges the passage of Intro. 495.