



**Testimony of Carlos Castell Croke  
Associate for NYC Programs  
New York League of Conservation Voters**

**City Council Joint Hearing  
Committees on Parks and Recreation and Sanitation  
December 18, 2020**

Good afternoon, my name is Carlos Castell Croke and I am the Associate for New York City Programs at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient. I would like to thank Chairs Koo and Reynoso for holding this important hearing and for the opportunity to testify today.

The unprecedented recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has forced drastic cuts to many environmental initiatives and city agencies that are essential to effectively combating climate change, including the Parks and Sanitation Departments. We are staunch advocates for the mission of these agencies, as they provide critical environmental services that keep New Yorkers and the environment healthy.

The organic waste recycling program faced particularly devastating cuts in the FY 2021 budget, with curbside collection suspended entirely and many drop-off sites eliminated. These cuts mean that New York City has fallen even further behind our peer cities in sustainably handling our solid waste. Reducing waste is a crucial aspect of combating climate change that cannot wait for opportunity or convenience. Organic waste encompasses more than a third of New York City's waste stream and when landfilled it releases methane, a greenhouse gas 30 times more potent than carbon dioxide. The city needs to be doing everything in its power to maintain the limited organic waste recycling it still has in order to reduce emissions and best position us to get back on track with our waste reduction goals.

I am here today to voice NYLCV's support for the community compost sites we all at this hearing care so much about. These sites provide a critical service to New York City residents as some of the remaining organic waste drop-off sites. We must find a permanent solution for these sites. We would urge the mayor to direct agencies to work with the LES Ecology Center, Big Reuse, other composting organizations and climate and community advocates to find permanent sites that effectively suit the needs of these projects. The city must be a partner in the fight to solve climate change. I implore the council to help us protect composting in our city so that we can uphold our commitments to the environment and waste reduction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.