

Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

FOOD RECOVERY AND RECYCLING ACT IN THE SFY 2018-19 BUDGET

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to requiring large food waste generators to separate excess food for recovery and recycling.

BACKGROUND

Wasted food is a serious economic, environmental, and food security problem. The irresponsible overproduction, distribution, and preparation of food has led to excessive waste of usable food scraps, contributed to climate change, and perpetuated the challenges of food insecurity. New York generates an estimated 4 million tons of excess food annually, which makes up 18% of the state's municipal solid waste stream. The vast majority of wasted food is disposed of in landfills, where it breaks down and releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Meanwhile, an estimated 2.5 million New Yorkers are facing hunger and food insecurity.

JUSTIFICATION

It is critical to reform our practices to ensure that instead of wasting food, we are redistributing excess food to those in need, and recycling food to create nutrient rich soil and renewable energy. This act establishes a food scraps hierarchy for the state of New York. The first tier of the hierarchy is *source reduction*, to reduce the initial volume of food produced by commercial generators and residents. The second tier is *recovery*, to feed wholesome food to the hungry. The third tier is *repurposing* excess food to feed animals. The fourth tier is *recycling*, by processing any leftover food through composting or anaerobic digestion. This bill would yield immense benefits to the environment, economy, and the health of New Yorkers.

SUMMARY OF KEY PROVISIONS

- Beginning January 1, 2021:
 - Generators of food waste with an annual average of 2 tons per week or more of excess food scraps are required to donate edible food and repurpose and recycle food scraps. Generators include, but are not limited to, supermarkets, restaurants, higher educational institutions, hotels, food processors, correctional facilities, sports or entertainment venues, and hospitals or other health care facilities (generators *do not* include elementary or secondary schools).
 - Incinerators and landfills are prohibited from accepting food scraps from covered food generators.
- Designated food scraps generators may petition the DEC for a *temporary* waiver from some or all requirements of this act
- Requires the DEC to develop educational materials on food waste minimization for municipalities.
- DEC will promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this act.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS FOOD RECOVERY AND RECYCLING ACT IN THE SFY 2018-19 BUDGET

Citizens Campaign for the Environment is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the environment.

January 22, 2018