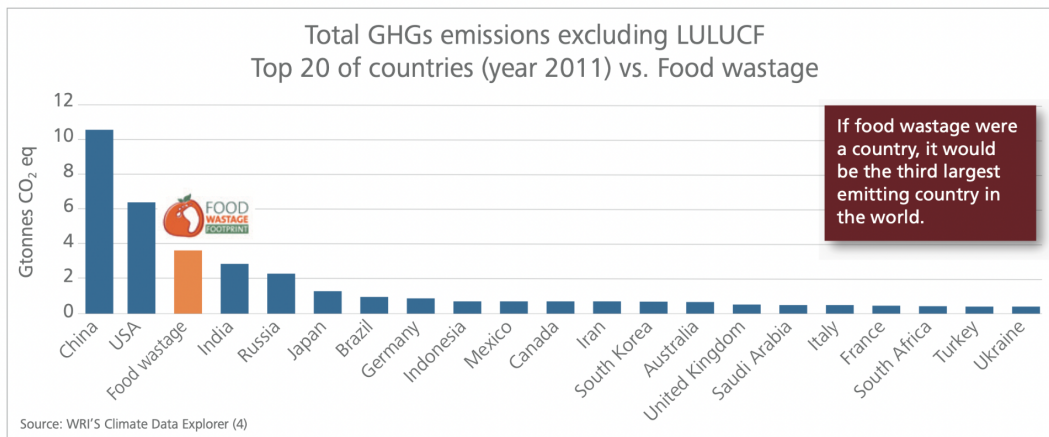


January 19, 2023

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding ensuring adequate funding for NY city and state wide composting programs under the CLCPA Plan section on **Organic Waste Reduction and Recycling**.

With the weekly stream of news of natural disasters damaging an ever growing number of communities across the country, including NY, many New Yorkers are looking for ways to do their part to reduce their carbon footprint. However, it's likely that many are not aware of the connection that their food waste has on climate change and that they can actually help make a difference by diverting their food waste from the waste stream. Programs to divert food waste by composting are not adequately funded or promoted. Funding is desperately needed and must be prioritized..

The general public is also largely not aware that, according to the U.S Environmental Protection Agency, food is the single largest category of material placed in municipal landfills, where it emits methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. Landfills are the nation's third-largest source of methane emissions after the oil and gas industry and the agricultural industry due to livestock emissions. Plus, globally, food waste is the [3rd largest emitter](#) of greenhouse gas next to only China and the US according to the UN.



The fastest way we can help mitigate climate change is by reducing methane released into our atmosphere. Composting programs are a key component in doing so. Food scraps don't belong in a landfill or incinerator when we have much better options. They should be diverted to composting or [biogas generation](#). New York state should take the lead on this issue.

I was heartened to see that The CLCPA plan states that:

- The Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG) agrees that ending the disposal of food scraps and yard trimmings at landfills and combustors is probably the **single most important action the State can take to cut emissions from this sector.**
 - Please do not lose sight of this.
- Reducing the disposal of organics, including food scraps (food grown for human consumption that has not been consumed and is destined for recycling or disposal), is **key to reducing the methane and CO2 emissions at landfills and combustion facilities.**
- Reduction of food supply chain losses: **The State should provide funding to research food loss throughout the food supply chain**, from farm to table, and financially support means to reduce waste at all points in the system.
 - Please make sure to include and investigate waste at government agencies as one of those points in the system. I was horrified by just this most recent example - a story covered by Eyewitness News and New York Post last week - of significant food waste in NYC related to feeding the migrants.
 - <https://nypost.com/2023/01/10/tons-of-food-gets-tossed-by-nyc-hotel-because-migrants-wont-eat-it/>
 - This is particularly egregious as nearly 1 in 3 NYC residents are food insecure. Manhattan has one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the country. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, food insecurity rose 50% in NYC.
- Financial assistance for organics recycling infrastructure: **The State should expand existing financial assistance programs for organics recycling facility infrastructure, including collection and processing, for small-scale and larger-scale operations.**
 - NYC must be prioritized.
- Food waste reduction and donation for businesses: DEC should continue to develop food waste reduction education and outreach specific to the business sector and encourage greater food donation.
 - Please be sure to include targeting consumers, in addition to business. Significant marketing and outreach has been missing and is needed to change consumer behavior and perceptions to increase participation in composting programs.

- **Outreach and education to promote organics recycling:** DEC should continue and expand outreach and technical assistance to expand all aspects of organics recycling (drop-off programs, household food waste reduction, school programs, facilities, etc.).
 - Please do not lose sight of this important issue and ensure adequate funding for the wide variety of educational programs and outreach needed to address this.

For NYC, the cost of NOT having a city wide mandatory organics program, is actually greater than the cost of establishing an effective, universal program, when all costs are considered - fiscal, environmental, social, health and opportunity costs.

NYC's waste export contract costs alone represent a fiscal cost to NYC taxpayers of \$470M in FY23 - just to bury & burn all its waste. This cost can be expected to skyrocket now due to inflation. As 41% of NYC's exported trash is organic material - the organics portion of the fiscal cost is approximately \$193M/FY23. Over the next 4.5 years that represents \$964M if we keep doing the same thing.

Continuing to do what we are currently doing (paying for waste export to bury and burn) is not a sustainable long term waste management policy. Spending (or I might say wasting) this money by continuing this way is not fiscally responsible, when we could be spending these funds on building a program that will ultimately cost less in the long run, by building local infrastructure and organics processing facilities, creating green jobs. The State needs to ensure that NYC receives the financial support it needs to advance toward a more fiscally responsible long term plan and make NYC leaders in diverting food waste and encouraging food waste reduction.

In addition to fiscal costs, there are additional costs this year for NYC alone:

- Environmental Costs - the additional \$28M related to the cost of carbon and methane emissions from burning and burying
- Environmental Justice/Social Costs - the pollution of disadvantaged (largely minority) communities that causes significant health impacts.. Sonal Jessel from WE ACT For Environmental Justice provided some statistics in her oral testimony today which are unacceptable and should concern everyone.
- Opportunity Costs - the estimated additional \$12-22M (the lost revenue forfeited) from compost & energy sales
- Rat Mitigation - cost savings unknown
- All totaled, a minimum of \$233M/ FY23 - when all known costs included

As a volunteer member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board (MSWAB), I would also like to share the following additional information - a link to the organic committee's web page and a two page fact sheet on organics:

<https://www.manhattanswab.org/organics>

<https://www.manhattanswab.org/mswab-factsheets>

Thank you.

Allison Allen

New York, NY 10022

allisonaallen@aol.co

