



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

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**Testimony on Intro 559, “Skip the Stuff”
Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection
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Thank you Chair Velázquez and members of the committee for taking the time today to hold this hearing on single-use plastics and our city’s food purveyors.

As trash continues to pile up on our streets, we should not lose sight of our ambitious goal of sending zero waste to landfills by 2030. Decreasing single-use plastic waste would further our progress toward this goal while saving taxpayer money, saving our small businesses money, and aiding our efforts to save the planet.

Businesses in the U.S. spend about \$20 billion every year buying utensils, napkins, condiment packets, and other items that are almost immediately thrown away. Last year, New York City spent \$452 million to send 3.4 million tons of household waste to landfills, of which approximately 18,000 tons was single-use plastics. A 2021 study by Beyond Plastics showed that the production and disposal of plastics is set to outpace coal in its contribution to climate change in the U.S. by 2030. Given this, take-out and food delivery bags filled with single-use items are not a simple convenience, rather they are a hindrance to reducing waste and taking aggressive action on climate change.

The solution here is simple. Intro 559 makes skipping the stuff the default, which makes sense particularly for customers eating take-out or delivery at home, where presumably they have reusable items that won’t end up directly in the trash. Importantly, having to choose to receive these items will make customers conscious of their decisions, which will help us chip away at a culture that consumes plastics without giving a second thought to need and impact.

Whenever we suggest policy that could financially impact small businesses, we must be mindful to ensure that implementation includes extensive outreach, education, and the opportunity to cure violations before financial penalties are issued. I would like to see more specifics in this legislation about that, and am hopeful that on the whole, this bill will save NYC businesses much more money than it will cost them – about \$3,000 per year per business in savings, according to some estimates.

We have already reduced our reliance on plastic bags, and we must bring that same desire to changing our behavior regarding other single-use plastics. Let’s skip the stuff and put our environment first. Thank you again for holding this hearing and allowing me to speak today.