



**Testimony from THE POINT CDC for the Public Hearing on NYC Commercial Waste Zones Environmental Impact Statement (DSNY).**

Good Evening, my name is Fernando Ortiz; I am the Climate Preparedness and Resiliency Organizer for THE POINT CDC which is a non-profit organization dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx. Our mission is to encourage the arts, local enterprise, responsible ecology, and self-investment in the Hunts Point community. We are also leading a community based climate resiliency plan, called the *South Bronx Community Resiliency Agenda*. I am here today to show support for the NYC Commercial Waste Zone program's Environmental Impact Statement and to ensure that impacts of EJ communities are at the forefront in proposed legislation. Hunts Point is in the South Bronx Significant Maritime Industrial area— one of six in New York City. This zoning designation allows for heavy industrial activity and maritime use within our community such as the Hunts Point Food Market, 15 waste transfer stations, the Hunts Point Wastewater Treatment Plant, four power plants, 23 auto dismantlers and 11 scrap metal processors and other industries like Fresh Direct that require high volume of diesel-trucks passing through our community. The Major Deegan Expressway, the Sheridan Expressway and the Bruckner Expressway also border our communities.

The South Bronx is home to about 6.5% of the city's population yet, handles 100% of the Bronx waste and about 30% of all of NYC waste. The proximity to hazardous waste sites and to high truck traffic intensifies the public health concerns around poor air quality in the South Bronx. An estimated 20,000 diesel-fueled trucks pass daily through Hunts Point making their way through the expressways or from the industrial sites located within our communities and making pedestrian streets unsafe to cross. The South Bronx forms part of the infamous "Asthma Alley" because it has some of the highest asthma rates in the city. Hunts Point ranks among the highest community with PM2.5 contaminants in the air, harmful particles that enter our respiratory system and contribute to illnesses such as asthma and lung cancer. The asthma rates in the South Bronx are 8 times the national average, with 1 in 4 children suffering from asthma and with 33% children hospitalizations occurring within the South Bronx and asthma



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death rates four times higher than the national average. Other harmful pollutants in our air include Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), Benzene and Formaldehyde- all known carcinogens.

THE POINT supports the NYC Commercial Waste Zones EIS because of the benefits it can provide for the South Bronx and for other environmental justice communities throughout NYC. The commercial waste zones will result in significant reductions in air pollution, ghg emission, and noise, by taking miles of truck traffic off of NYC city streets. While the waste equity bill passage last year was instrumental in garnering the reductions in permitted waste capacity in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Southeast Queens, we believe that the forthcoming legislation can further prioritize EJ communities and ensure reduction in vehicle miles by ensuring that waste is transported to the waste transfer stations geographically closest to the waste collection zones. We encourage a mandatory truck count monitoring to ensure that vehicular transport is actually reduced in communities like ours where on some corners in the *South Bronx*- 304 trucks/hour, drive by, 45% of which are waste trucks. This would result in dramatic reductions in PM 2.5 emissions and other air pollutants. Furthermore, we encourage the incentivization of commercial waste haulers to utilize nearby marine transfer stations (MTSs), which are equitably distributed throughout the city - at the MTS's, marine barges have the capacity to displace vehicle miles from the export of waste from 48 long haul diesel trucks.

This is the immediate next step in overcoming the disproportionate overburden that the community has endured due to the high concentration of transfer stations and truck traffic in our community. We applaud your efforts to analyze commercial waste zones and encourage you to move forward with this implementation and to prioritize environmental justice communities that have held the burden of waste inequity for far too long.