

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Authorizing the Committee on Streets & Services to hold hearings regarding the City of Philadelphia's commitment to its recycling program.

Sponsors: Councilmember Green, Councilmember Squilla, Councilmember Henon, Councilmember Parker

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3/20/2019	0	Committee on Streets and Services			
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Authorizing the Committee on Streets & Services to hold hearings regarding the City of Philadelphia's commitment to its recycling program.

WHEREAS, The Kenney Administration committed Philadelphia to a goal of achieving zero waste by 2035 to address the City's litter and pollution problems; and

WHEREAS, That commitment spurred the Zero Waste and Litter Action Plan, which calls for expanded recycling efforts to accomplish this goal; and

WHEREAS, According to investigations by news media, fifty percent of recyclable materials currently collected by the Philadelphia Streets Department are not recycled but are incinerated; and

WHEREAS, Incineration of materials collected for recycling has resulted from the City's failure to establish a long-term contract for recycling; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia had the opportunity to enter into such long-term contract with its previous recycling contractor, Republic Services, but failed to timely do so, or otherwise secure a cost-effective solution while recycling costs favored the City; and

WHEREAS, The principal reason prices for recycling have increased dramatically in recent years is China's near prohibition on the import of most recyclable materials after years of accepting recycling with high levels of contamination; and

WHEREAS, Due to its failure to secure a long-term solution, the City has turned to unsustainable stopgap measures that include incinerating material collected for recycling, with the deleterious health and environmental consequences that entails; and

WHEREAS, This scramble includes short-term contracts with two waste disposals companies, Waste Management and Covanta, wherein the former recycles roughly half of the City's recyclable materials at a cost to the City of \$78 per ton, and Covanta incinerates roughly half of the City's recyclable materials at a cost to the City of \$63 per ton; and

WHEREAS, Incinerating waste emits harmful pollutants that pose myriad hazards to human health; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphians reasonably expect that materials they have sorted for recycling will in fact be recycled; and

WHEREAS, Realizing the Kenney Administration's zero waste goal will require a significant expansion and reform of Philadelphia's recycling program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby authorize the Committee on Streets & Services to hold hearings regarding the City of Philadelphia's commitment to its recycling program.