

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the City of Philadelphia Council Committee on Public Safety to hold public hearings to examine enforcement practices, preventative measures, and potential solutions necessary to address the widespread illegal dumping taking place in the City of Philadelphia, and to explore ways to collaborate with City agencies to address this problem.

WHEREAS, Illegal dumping has been an epidemic in Philadelphia's neighborhoods for years, and contributes to the diminishing quality of life and livability for the residents of our City by creating environmental health hazards; and

WHEREAS, Across the City, there are vacant lots filled with tires that have been illegally disposed of by automobile repair shops. As the tires decompose, the chemicals they release can become airborne and lead to fires like the tire fire that spread plumes of smoke across Southwest Philadelphia in November 2021; and

WHEREAS, Commercial corridors, residential streets, lots, and alleyways across the City are littered with debris, garbage, tires and trash, causing pollution to our groundwater, air and soil. Illegal dumping also negatively affects neighborhood property values and creates potential liability for property owners; and

WHEREAS, Illegally dumped litter and debris damage our City's economy by deterring residents and visitors from shopping in local business corridors; and

WHEREAS, Various studies, including James Q. Wilson and George Kelling's "Broken Window Theory," have linked litter and debris to decreased property values and increased crime rates. The Broken Window Theory argues that crime reduction and overall public safety can be linked to the prevention of illegal dumping in neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Illegally dumped materials act as breeding grounds for disease-carrying pests, including rodents and mosquitoes, and pose an immediate risk to individuals who come into contact with dangerous debris; and

WHEREAS, City Departments use Philly 311 data to track response times and to increase the efficiency of City services; and

WHEREAS, According to data collected by Philly 311, Philadelphians placed 26,671 illegal dumping and 7,644 vacant lot cleanup requests. Inadequate trash collection, commercial dumping, and lack of information and accessibility regarding the City's sanitation convenience centers are all contributing factors to the increase of trash littering Philadelphia's streets; and

WHEREAS, City Departments use Philly 311 data to track response times and to increase the efficiency of City services, but 311 does not operate its own publicly accessible database to track the number of service requests received, the response times on requests, and what the area of the city the requests are coming from; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, the Council Committee on Technology and information conducted a hearing to explore

the creation of a “CouncilStat” system that would interface with Philly 311 data systems to help improve the public’s access to 311, monitor response times, and allow City Council to be more proactive in the creation of legislative and policy changes to improve service delivery in the City, but no such system was created following the hearing; and

WHEREAS, Currently 311 service requests can only be tracked by individual request number on the Philly 311 website, and there is no publicly accessible online interface to track response times, or the volume of requests by geographical area or subject; and

WHEREAS, Allowing more open access to 311 data will create more transparency and allow for a more informed debate on equity in the delivery of City services, and allow legislators to view data that will allow them to better identify and address trends in the demand for City services both within and across Council district lines; and

WHEREAS, We must collaborate with City agencies to create innovative solutions to illegal dumping to create cleaner, safer streets for all of Philadelphia’s residents; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the City of Philadelphia Council Committee on Public Safety to hold public hearings to examine enforcement practices, preventative measures, and potential solutions necessary to address the widespread illegal dumping taking place in the City of Philadelphia, and to explore ways to collaborate with City agencies to address this problem.