

(Pending Committee Approval)

Bronx CB8 Environment & Sanitation Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Start Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Board Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471

Meeting Recording

1. Welcome & Roll Call

a. Committee:

- i. Present (3): Daniel Rowen, Laura Spalter, Emily Hausman
- ii. Absent (4): Steven Froot, Karen Argenti (Community Committee Member), Robert Fanuzzi (Community Committee Member / on Zoom), Rob Spalter (Community Committee Member)

b. Public:

- i. C. Tepelus, R. Martin

2. Approval of Committee Minutes – April 16, 2025

- a. Unanimously approved by quorum.

3. Chairperson's Report

- a. FloodNet is an organization deploying flood water sensors throughout the city, and to request a location that frequently floods whenever it rains, we encourage everyone to visit this URL:
<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/f1f4eb6214af4f47a8394fd0b7b96dd4>
- b. Recent news that unfortunately the EPA has notified Fordham that they are rescinding the multimillion-dollar grant that went toward their Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program, which had prioritized underinvested communities who are overburdened by environmental stressors in EPA's Region 2—New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- c. Also see attached news articles relating to environmental and sanitation issues.

4. Unfinished Business

- a. Harlem River Use and Attainability Assessment (UAA) Plan Next Steps

- i. Bob presented on this, explaining the background and current proposal.
See Zoom for full discussion.
- ii. Committee unanimously approved resolution opposing reclassification.

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 (CB8) has requested green infrastructure (GI) be built in the Bronx Community District 8 in the Harlem River Watershed to mitigate the impacts of combined sewer overflows polluting the Harlem River, exacerbating flooding in CB8, and degrading our water quality; and,

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) requested that the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) prepare a study known as the Use Attainability Analysis (UAA) in lieu of a comprehensive and long-term plan to control CSOs into our waterbodies -- namely the Van Cortlandt Park Hester and Piero Mill Pond, Harlem and Hudson Rivers; and,

WHEREAS, rather than protect primary contact recreation (PCR) as required by the Clean Water Act (CWA), the UAA recommends a reclassification to a standard whereby storms will limit swimming at least 30% of the 156 recreational season days. (See UAA page166); and,

WHEREAS, the UAA report makes the assumption that the selected project to protect PCR is too expensive, because it would lead to an increase in water rates and adversely impact low-income residents,

WHEREAS, there are countless adverse impact of “no action” by the agencies in protecting the waterbodies;¹ and,

WHEREAS, DEP has not yet provided sufficient GI projects outside of the Tibbetts Daylighting to mitigate CSOs into Harlem River² – despite various alternatives outlined in the 2019 GI Consent Decree³;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CB8 rejects the reclassification of the Harlem River;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CB8 encourages DEP to reengage the public through the long term control plan process and pursue alternative analysis to the present preferred option, that includes GI suited for the topography of CB8.

¹ Since the various consent decrees, the lack of a comprehensive plan to build small nature-based features such as green infrastructure (GI) from the top of the hills to the valleys has harmed the residents living in the Harlem River Watershed.

² Without looking how other places in the nation have dealt with using the smaller and more versatile method to control water quantity, as a control of the CSO valve from opening, should be prioritized. This should include GIs in a tub and tying into the pipe for overflows, larger design for those that infiltration to capture 8-10 inches, etc.

³ Some examples include green roofs, trees and tree boxes, pervious pavement, rain gardens, vegetated swales, planters, stormwater harvesting and reuse systems, and surface and subsurface stormwater storage systems that either perform as retention or slow-release detention systems. Related sewer conveyance needed to connect a green infrastructure asset to sewer infrastructure is included as part of the “Green Infrastructure.” II. CITYWIDE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM page 5 GI Consent Decree 2023.

- iii. Resolution Urging the New York State Assembly and Senate to Pass the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (Senate Bill 1464 / Assembly Bill 1749)
 - Laura has issues, committee voted to postpone any vote and further discussion until June meeting.

5. New Business

- a. Discussion of DOT's Bailey Ave Redesign Plans as Recently Presented to T&T/Exec
 - i. Bob discusses that there are two separate projects, one at the corner of Van Cortlandt Park South and Bailey, and the other extending down Bailey to 225th Street. These redesigns are coinciding with resurfacing that was already scheduled for this summer.
 - ii. BCEQ was upset by the original proposal, as shown, which appeared to show new concrete islands in place of trees and other greenery. However, when this was brought up to DOT at the Exec meeting, they explained that the plans shown for down Bailey Ave were not finalized and that they would not be removing any trees or tree boxes as part of the project, in fact, they planned to add new tree boxes where appropriate and maintain the current ones, specifically calling out the triangle at W 234th, which will be preserved.

6. Adjournment at 8:30pm

New report finds the Bronx is home to the most chronic litterers



By Emily Swanson

Posted on May 12, 2025



Photo Getty Images

A new study released May 12 highlights a disconnect between New Yorkers' attitudes toward littering and their own behavior — with Bronx residents among the worst offenders.

The Sanitation

Foundation, a nonprofit affiliated with the city's Department of Sanitation, surveyed more than 1,000 residents across the five boroughs — 47%

— admitted they don't always dispose of their trash properly. That figure is significantly higher than the citywide average of 38%.

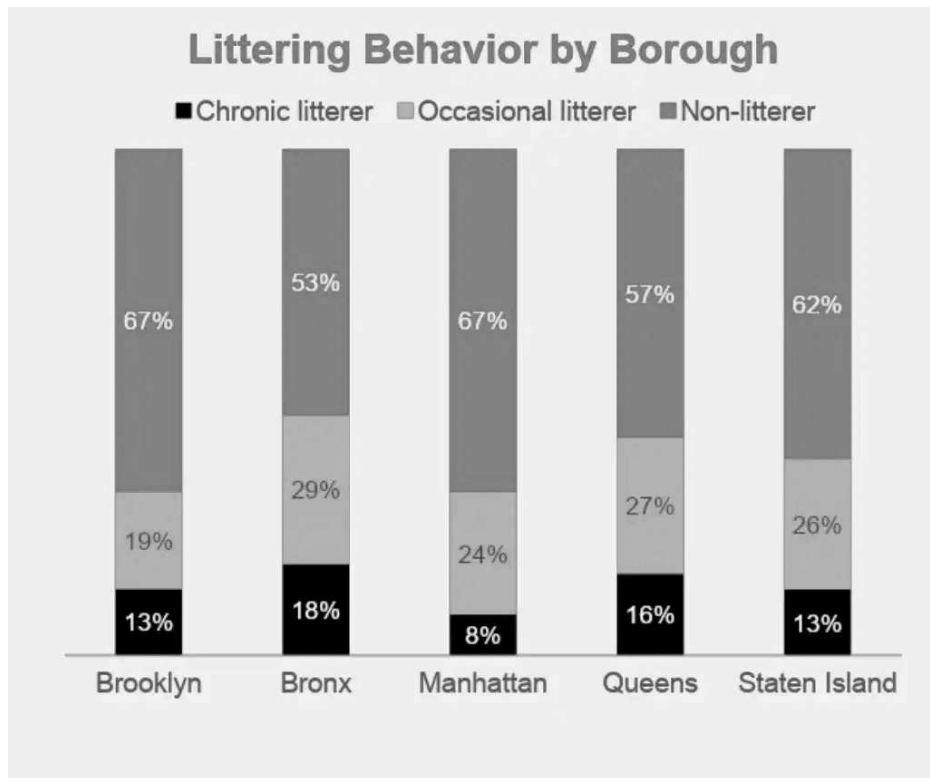
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The report also found that 14% of respondents were classified as "chronic litterers," meaning they rarely throw away trash correctly when outdoors. This group was more likely to be men between



Screenshot from Sanitation Foundation report, "The Dirty Truth: How New Yorkers Really Feel About Litter"

Among the boroughs, the report revealed the Bronx had the city's highest percentage of chronic litterers at 18%, compared to 16% in Queens, 13% in Brooklyn and Staten Island and 8% in Manhattan.

The report also examined the reasons why people throw trash on the ground. The two most common excuses for chronic litterers were "I was in a hurry" and having no trash can nearby.

At the same time, chronic litterers were more likely than non-litterers to say that littering "makes it feel like no one cares," and nearly half acknowledged that trash on the ground attracts rats.

The Sanitation Foundation is using the survey results to shape a new public awareness campaign featuring the slogan: "Don't Do New York City Dirty."

Signs will soon begin popping up on buses, billboards and storefronts all over the city, and the campaign will also feature an interactive art installation in Cooper Square and video ads starring notable New Yorkers.

Although the report had some bad news for the Bronx, it offered some signs of hope for a lessening of the unsightly trash problem.

The survey found that 67% of New Yorkers have taken some kind of action against littering, whether picking up garbage themselves, calling out a friend or family member for littering or calling 311.

Reach Emily Swanson at eswanson@schnepsmedia.com or (646) 717-0015. For more coverage, follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @bronxtimes

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NEWS

Plan to power down NYC's polluting peaker plants faces delays due to Trump



Astoria Generating Company

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By Rosemary Misdary

Published May 13, 2025 at 12:46 p.m. ET

8 comments

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President Donald Trump's tariffs and energy policies are delaying New York's plan to retire seven power plants in the New York City area that are only used during peak-demand periods and emit a disproportionate amount of pollution.

The New York Power Authority wrote in a [report](#) made public Monday that the Trump administration had injected major uncertainty into the state's goal of transitioning away from fossil fuels. Shutting down peaker plants by 2030 is a key part of that goal — provided that reliable electricity service can be maintained and air pollution is not increased from remaining plants. But the report notes that delays to renewable energy projects, such as a large wind farm off of the coast of Long Island, are increasing the likelihood the peaker plants will need to remain in operation.

"The new administration has introduced new uncertainties into New York's energy security and clean energy priorities," the report states. "Threats to existing power imports from Ontario and Quebec, which make up the largest international power exchange in the world, were previously unimaginable but are real today. ... The pace of uncertainty in renewable energy and the electric industry continues to increase as the federal administration releases multiple executive orders that may impact how electricity is regulated, and how states may address climate change challenges within their borders."

[Gothamist reported](#) last month that Trump's pause on new permits for offshore wind projects and withdrawal of federal funding for green energy initiatives were putting New York's climate goals further out of reach. Trump's trade war with China also threatened to disrupt supply chains and dramatically raise the cost of key materials used to address climate change, like solar power and wind turbines.

Trump and China earlier this week agreed to pause the trade war's harshest tariffs for 90 days.

State Attorney General Letitia James has also [sued the Trump administration](#), arguing its halting of construction on a major offshore wind project known as Empire 1 was harming the state's climate and economy.

Peaker plants are power facilities that run only during peak demand — on the coldest days of winter or the hottest days of summer — typically less than 5% of the year. Environmentalists point to peaker plants as prime examples of environmental injustice because most are located in poor communities. Activists held an "early retirement party" on May 3 for a peaker plant on the Williamsburg waterfront in anticipation of the power authority's report.

The report notes that five of the seven peaker plants are under consideration for conversion into battery-storage facilities when they are eventually retired.

The state's power authority wrote that further analysis was needed to determine when the peaker plants can be permanently powered down. According to Gov. Kathy Hochul's office, the state has closed down nearly 5 gigawatts' worth of fossil fuel plants over the last five years and replaced almost half of them with renewable energy.

But environmentalists said they were frustrated.

"They could be writing about how much renewable energy they need to build and are going to build to ensure grid reliability, to ensure that air pollution is going down, but instead they're giving a series of excuses and hand waves," said Michael Paulson, associate director of Sane Energy Project, which advocates for a transition to renewable energy. "We can't wait another year. We can't wait another week. We have absolutely no time to lose."

Torres calls on City Hall to fund Harlem River Environmental Restoration Project

By Sadie Brown

Posted on May 9, 2025



Federal funding for a Harlem River restoration project could be lost if the city doesn't agree to share the cost.

Photo Courtesy of the Harlem River Working Group

U.S. Rep. Ritchie Torres warned City Hall on Monday that a critical environmental study aimed at restoring the Harlem River is at risk of losing federal funding unless the city steps up.

In a letter to Mayor Eric Adams and Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Rohit T. Aggarwala, Torres said the city must commit \$500,000 to match a federal allocation already secured by Congress. The \$1 million study would

mark a key first step in efforts to clean the heavily polluted waterway that separates the Bronx from Manhattan.

Torres cautioned that the federal share will be forfeited if the city fails to allocate its portion before the start of the new fiscal year.

Torres told the mayor and the city's top environmental official that the project was important for the communities close to the Harlem River in the Bronx and to the city's sustainability goals.

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“The Harlem River project represents a critical opportunity to restore ecological function, improve water quality, enhance public access, and strengthen New York City's climate resilience,” Torres wrote. “Failure to move forward would mean not only the loss of current federal dollars but also jeopardizing future environmental investments in the Bronx and across New York City.”

Chauncy Young, coordinator of the Harlem River Working Group, has spent years working alongside Bronx communities and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a plan to restore the long-polluted waterway. He told the Bronx Times that losing the funding for the feasibility study—which will determine whether the full cleanup project can move forward—could set back the river's revitalization by several years.

He emphasized the critical role that collaboration across all levels of government has played in the success of major sustainability initiatives such as the Hudson River Greenway and the Bronx River Greenway. He also questioned whether the city would show the same hesitation in matching federal funding for similar projects in more affluent neighborhoods.

“We need the [cooperation] to continue and it's devastating if it's on the part of our city that these funds are not provided,” Young said.

The city's Department of Transportation (DOT) has committed to building a greenway on the seven-mile stretch along the river in the West and South Bronx which will connect Randalls Island to Van Cortlandt Park. But the matching funds that Torres and environmental advocates seek would go towards revitalizing the waterway itself.

Decades of development along the Harlem River have destroyed wetland habitats, replaced natural shorelines with concrete bulkheads, caused sewage contamination and overflow during heavy rains, and buried dozens of small tributary streams that once fed into the river. The environmental project would aim to restore degraded habitats and use updated green infrastructure to improve the water quality.

But the city did not directly say whether it planned on matching federal funds for the environmental restoration project, instead implying that such an allocation would largely duplicate existing efforts.

City Hall told the Bronx Times that the administration already has a long-term plan for cleaning up all of its waterways that will address many of the concerns of the Harlem River Working Group.

As part of that plan, the city is slated to begin construction on a large portion of its waterways plan called the Tibbetts Brook daylighting project later this year, which will reroute a long-buried brook above ground to avoid the city's sewer system and reduce overflow into the Harlem River.

"We are committed to collaborating with our partners to ensure that any new studies and investments complement our multi-billion-dollar initiatives to reduce combined sewer overflows and enhance water quality across New York City's waterways, including the Harlem River," City Hall spokesperson Allison Maser said in a statement.

But plans for the citywide effort to clean up its waterways, called the Open Waters Long Term Control Plan, seem to focus exclusively on sewage overflow mitigation, making no mention of restoring natural shorelines or wetland habitats.

Young said that money for the Harlem River Environmental Restoration Project is key in mitigating the harm done to communities and environments in the Bronx through careless development.

"To lose those funds right now would be a real continued issue of environmental justice and injustice that we've been experiencing in this community for decades," Young said.

Torres told the Bronx Times in a statement that now is the time for the city to cover its fair share saying, "the clock is ticking."

"This initiative is vital to the environment, health, and well-being of the Bronx, and we can't afford to let this opportunity slip away," Torres said. "I urge City Hall to act swiftly and ensure this critical investment becomes a reality."

NEWS

Trump administration announces 'illegal' rollback of energy and water efficiency standards / The Trump administration is attempting to wipe decades of efficiency standards off the books.

by **Justine Calma**

May 12, 2025, 5:36 PM EDT

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Comments (20 New)



Cath Virginia / The Verge | Photos from Scott Olson, Getty Images



Justine Calma is a senior science reporter covering energy and the environment with more than a decade of experience. She is also the host of **Hell or High Water: When Disaster Hits Home**, a podcast from Vox Media and Audible Originals.

The US Energy Department says it's rolling back long-standing efficiency standards for appliances, which advocates are calling a clear violation of the law. Continuing the Trump administration's assault on federal water and energy

efficiency programs, the department announced today what it's calling its "largest deregulatory effort in history."

The agency is trying to rollback 47 regulations it says are "burdensome and costly," including more than a dozen efficiency standards for appliances and battery chargers. The proposed rules target the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA), which contains an anti-backsliding provision — and that the Trump administration is seemingly trying to bypass.

"If this attack on consumers succeeds, President Trump would be raising costs dramatically for families as manufacturers dump energy- and water-wasting products into the market. Fortunately, it's patently illegal, so hold your horses," Andrew deLaski, executive director of the Appliance Standards Awareness Project, said in a press statement released today.

"Fortunately, it's patently illegal, so hold your horses."

The Energy Department didn't immediately respond to a press inquiry from *The Verge* asking why it believes its proposals do not violate EPCA, which passed Congress in 1975 and had the anti-backsliding provision added in 1987. However, drafts of proposed rules on the Federal Register's website say that it wants to return standards to previous limits set by Congress.

In some cases, doing so could eliminate decades of energy and water saving standards, deLaski tells *The Verge*. A proposed rule for commercial clothes washers, for instance, would bring water conservation standards back to a "statutory baseline" set in 2007. Other rules target microwave ovens, conventional ovens, dish washers, faucets, portable air conditioners, and more.

The law's anti-backsliding provision stipulates that the energy secretary can't amend a standard in a way that "increases the maximum allowable energy use" or "decreases the minimum required energy efficiency" of a covered product. In other

words, the agency can't issue rules that are weaker than they were before. In many cases, the Energy Department has updated standards initially set by Congress as more efficient technologies became available — which it's required to do by law if it is “economically justified.”

The rules proposed today attempt to go back to limits set by Congress years ago, undoing tougher standards set more recently. The Energy Department is also attempting to get rid of standards altogether in cases where limits weren't explicitly set in law by Congress.

In the proposed rule for commercial clothes washers, the agency argues that the anti-backsliding provision applies to energy efficiency but not *water* standards. “Water use has nothing to do with the energy consumed by a clothes washer. Therefore, the anti-backsliding provision does not apply,” it says.

The agency still needs to open up its rules for public comment before attempting to finalize them, and is likely to face legal challenges. Courts have previously weighed in on the strength of the anti-backsliding provision. A 2004 decision from a federal appeals court says EPCA “unambiguously” constrains the Energy Department's ability to weaken efficiency standards once they are published as final rules in the Federal Register.

“We're seeing the wholesale abandonment of a dozen-plus energy efficiency standards without any justification, and that absolutely violates the anti-backsliding provision,” says Kit Kennedy, who was one of the attorneys in the 2004 case and is currently a managing director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The move follows a presidential memorandum Trump signed on Friday that takes aim at water use rules and related energy efficiency standards, as well as news that the Environmental Protection Agency plans to wind down the Energy Star program.

Related /

- **Donald Trump takes aim at more water and energy efficiency standards**

- **Trump cuts Energy Star program that saved households \$450 a year**

Experts warn that the proposed rules could lead to higher utility bills for consumers. While a program like Energy Star can help people choose more efficient appliances, standards the Trump administration is now targeting are supposed to ensure that more efficient technologies are accessible to anyone regardless of what they can afford to purchase.

“Appliance energy efficiency standards have been a great success. They save households on their electricity bills every month,” Michael Gerrard, founder and faculty director of the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University says in an email to *The Verge*. “Refrigerators are just as cold and just as large as they ever were but they are now much cheaper to run.”

20 COMMENTS (20 NEW)

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