



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 15, 2021

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Coalition Launches Fight to Regulate Last-Mile Trucking Facilities in New York City

Advocates from across the city call on city planning commission to manage rapid growth of last-mile trucking facilities

New York, NY — Today, the Last-Mile Coalition, a new city-wide coalition of environmental justice and public health advocates, launched its campaign to regulate last-mile trucking facilities in New York City (NYC). The coalition is calling on the NYC City Planning Commission to pass a Zoning Resolution Text Amendment to mitigate the explosive growth of last-mile trucking facilities – warehouses where packages are sorted and sent out for distribution.

Currently, last-mile trucking facilities do not undergo any public review process or environmental review. Because last-mile trucking facilities are not defined under zoning law, the NYC Department of City Planning (DCP) treats them as “warehouses” that can be constructed “as-of-right” in manufacturing districts and C8 commercial districts. This has resulted in the disproportionate placement and concentration of these trucking facilities in communities of color and low-income communities, which has led to increases in truck traffic and emissions in these neighborhoods.

The Last-Mile Coalition is urging the City Planning Commission (CPC) to amend the text of the Zoning Resolution for last-mile trucking facilities so that they undergo a review process and provide opportunities for the City to evaluate adverse impacts, while also providing ample opportunities for affected communities to provide public comments. In addition, the Zoning Resolution Text Amendment would define last-mile trucking facilities based on size and the number of vehicle trips per day.



The amendment would require last-mile trucking facility developers to seek a special permit from the CPC, which would require developers to show the facility's impact on traffic congestion, potential air pollution in surrounding disadvantaged communities, and compliance with waterfront district zoning requirements and New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act emissions reduction mandates. The amendment will also prevent the clustering of last-mile facilities in frontline, disadvantaged communities and encourage facilities to use renewable energy sources for onsite and operation activities.

"More and more last-mile warehouses are entering our city, while the communities affected – often Black and brown communities – have no voice in the process. These residents are the ones impacted by the increased traffic and noise pollution, and drop in air quality, as more facilities are opened in the same neighborhoods," said **Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams**. "The City Planning Commission must ensure these warehouses have to go through a process that takes into account community concerns and possible safety and environmental impacts. If we let these facilities continue to multiply without community input and involvement, we will continue to see more and more of these warehouses being built in the same areas, exacerbating their negative effects."

"I fully support the Last-Mile Coalition's call for the City Planning Commission to manage the rapid growth of last-mile trucking facilities," said **Brooklyn Borough President-elect Antonio Reynoso**. "At present, low-income communities of color are being overburdened with last-mile facilities and the pollution and truck traffic that come along with them. By implementing a review process through a zoning text amendment, we can ensure the fair share distribution of last-mile facilities while also requiring facilities to meet environmental standards."

"The imminent arrival of 6 last-mile distribution centers to Red Hook and Sunset Park is a threat to environmental, economic, and racial justice for the working families who call these neighborhoods home. We need oversight and input from the local community for changes of this concentration and scale," said **Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes**. "It is no coincidence that this is happening near a public housing community and an immigrant community of color. We must call on our City and State agencies, as well as our elected officials, to use all tools at their disposal to address this urgent phenomenon."

"I'm proud to stand together with UPROSE, my colleagues, fellow electeds, activists and community organizations in calling on the city to implement a special permitting process for new last-mile fulfillment



centers. The explosion of last-mile distribution centers across the city and in our District 38 highlight how out of touch big corporations such as Amazon are. We have been left to breathe diesel exhaust and exacerbated traffic conditions. The proposed special permit would allow for greater oversight over who gets to do business in our communities. We advocate working with partners who will develop our working waterfront in a way that's consistent with the demands of climate change and community-driven plans such as the GRID," said **Councilmember-elect Alexa Aviles**.

"The rapid and unchecked growth of last-mile trucking facilities concentrated in historically marginalized communities are threatening to not only exacerbate the climate crisis and health disparities, but inhibits frontline communities from accessing investments to implement a Just Transition. We are calling on the City to protect environmental justice communities and stop allowing huge corporations to make unlimited profit with no regard for local communities or our climate future," said **Elizabeth Yeampierre, Executive Director of UPROSE**.

"The rapid growth of last-mile deliveries in recent decades, especially during the pandemic, has substantially increased the volume and frequency of diesel-burning truck congestion in NYC. In turn, this has resulted in an explosion of last-mile trucking facilities concentrated in environmental justice communities. These are the same communities that have suffered from long-term exposure to toxic pollution due to decades of environmental racism and disinvestment. These huge facilities increase vehicle traffic, tailpipe emissions, and other toxic air pollution. The City must protect our communities and regulate these types of facilities by mandating public review and environmental assessments to prevent clustering in frontline communities," said **Kevin Garcia, Transportation Planner for the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance**.

"The explosion of last-mile facilities across the city translates to a rise in vehicular traffic and carbon emissions that exacerbate air pollution, as well as lead to detrimental noise and safety concerns in historic environmental justice communities that already experience high levels of congestion and other environmental harms. We affirm and reiterate the right to clean air and healthy, *healthful* environments, and call on the city to ensure that the rapid growth of these facilities does not continue unchecked and that community voices and concerns are heard and *prioritized* when it comes to decisions that have deep impacts on physical, mental, and environmental health. We can no longer allow the interest and profits of large corporations to come before the well-being, thriving, sustainable, and resilient visions and goals of our communities," said **Daniela Castillo, Green Light District Manager**.



“The syndemic that we are living in has exposed us to new threats. A city that is now dependant on thousands of deliveries per day for necessities, would eventually lead back to the very places where the most trash is dumped, where the biggest trucks sit in traffic for hours on end, and where there is little oversight on corporations that do not have the best interest of the community, no matter what the ads say. Hunts Point, and communities like ours, are once again in the crosshairs of developers with agendas that will expand traffic and pollution into our streets in the name of convenience and employment.” said **Danny R. Peralta, Executive Managing Director of The Point CDC.**

“Environmental Justice communities are already being choked out by toxic air pollution, toxic police, and toxic policies - they must not bear the brunt of more hazards or assaults on their health and public safety,” said **Anthony K. Rogers-Wright, Director of Environmental Justice at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.** “The City and associated agencies must demonstrate that Environmental Justice is not a rhetorical paperweight or talking point as much as it’s a verb, a set of actions manifested by self-determination in the form of enhanced public participation initiatives and commonsense amendments to the current Zoning Resolution that reflects the will of the people. New Yorkers overwhelmingly voted to amend the state’s Constitution and mandate that all residents shall have a right to clean air and water, and a healthful environment. It’s time to put these words into action, Environmental Justice communities matter just like the Black and Brown lives that call them home.”

“Rapid, unregulated development of last-mile warehouses is concentrated in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, the same communities that have been historically overburdened by toxic air pollution from diesel trucks and congested traffic. Together with the Last-Mile Coalition, we are calling on New York City to use its zoning powers to ensure communities learn about these facilities’ pollution, traffic and safety impacts before they are built, and have a voice in siting decisions and mitigation measures,” said **Alok Disa, Senior Policy Analyst at Earthjustice.** “The City must act now to manage the rapid growth of Last-Mile trucking facilities, ensure equitable siting, protect environmental justice communities from toxic air pollution, and promote the use of zero-emission trucks in line with New York’s climate mandates.”

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