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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND SPEAKER QUINN ANNOUNCE GREEN CART LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN NEIGHBORHOODS WITH GREATEST NEED**

*Program to Phase in Fifteen Hundred Vendors Over Two Years into Neighborhoods with Low Consumption and Limited Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*

*New Food Policy Task Force Partnership with the Food Trust and Food Bank for New York City*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Speaker Christine C. Quinn today proposed legislation that would increase the number of food carts that sell fresh fruits and vegetables only. The carts will be located in neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs where access to fresh fruit and vegetables is limited. The Green Cart proposal, recommended by the Food Policy Task Force, calls for 1,500 permits to be phased in over two years, and requires vendors to operate in designated neighborhoods where consumption of fruits and vegetables is low. The Mayor and Speaker were joined by Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs; [Health Department](#) Commissioner Thomas Frieden; New York City Food Policy Coordinator Benjamin Thomases; Food Bank for New York City President Lucy Cabrera; Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Care Center President Ulysses Kilgore; and Citizens' Committee for Children of New York Executive Director Jennifer March-Joly.

"Access to healthy foods varies widely throughout New York City, and in many lower-income neighborhoods, supermarkets are few and far between. There is demand for fruits and vegetables in these neighborhoods, and this regulatory change will enable the market to meet that demand," said Mayor Bloomberg. "The Green Cart legislation will also provide opportunities for vendors to make a living selling fresh fruits and vegetables in communities where healthy food can be difficult to find."

Cart permits will be issued for vendors in specific areas throughout the five boroughs where fruit and vegetable consumption is low. The allocations for designated areas within each borough, to be phased in over two years, are as follows: Bronx and Brooklyn will each get 500 permits; Queens will receive 250 permits; Manhattan will have 200, and Staten Island will receive 50 permits.

"The only way we'll ever put a dent in the dual problems of malnutrition and obesity is to increase access to healthy food," said Speaker Christine C. Quinn. "The Council has taken major steps to improve access to nutritious food, and with this legislation, we'll take another bold effort towards becoming a healthier and more equitable city."

A recent Health Department study comparing Harlem to the Upper East Side found that supermarkets in Harlem are 30 percent less common, and that only 3 percent of bodegas in Harlem carry leafy green vegetables as compared to 20 percent on the Upper East Side. The Green Cart legislation covers neighborhoods where at least 12 percent of adults reported, in Health Department surveys, that they did not eat any fruits or vegetables on the previous day.

"We are in the midst of an obesity epidemic," said Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas R. Frieden. "In some neighborhoods, rates of obesity and diabetes are 50 percent higher than the citywide average. To tackle this problem, and help prevent diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, we must change our environment and make healthy food more available."

The Mayor and the Speaker also announced a new partnership with The Food Trust and the Food Bank for New York City that will work with supermarket operators to develop policies encouraging them to locate in neighborhoods in need of improved access to healthy foods.

*Partnership with the Food Trust and the Food Bank for New York City*

The Food Policy Task Force facilitated a \$175,000 grant from the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman Foundation to the Food Trust to work with the Food Bank for New York City and the grocery industry to ensure adequate access to fruits and vegetables for all New Yorkers. This grant supplements an earlier \$75,000 allocation by the City Council to the Food Bank for this project. The Food Trust is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization which works to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food. Through its supermarket initiative, the Food Trust has helped spark the new development or renovation of more than 30 supermarkets in Pennsylvania in the last four years. This initiative has been recognized as a model program by the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Governor's Association.

"Our work at the Food Bank and FoodChange to address hunger, poverty and nutrition issues has taught us that creating access to affordable, nutritious food in low-income communities is the long-term solution we need," said Food Bank President Lucy Cabrera. "The City's new Green Cart legislation will put fresh fruits and vegetables on the tables of families in low-income neighborhoods across the city, and that is a huge achievement by any measure."

"One of the easiest ways to better our health is to eat more fruits and vegetables every day," said Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center President Ulysses Kilgore. "And while some New Yorkers are already doing this, many of us have difficulty because fresh fruits and vegetables are not as accessible in our neighborhoods. This proposal will make it possible for every New Yorker to choose a healthier diet."

"Limited access to nutritious, affordable food contributes to growing rates of childhood obesity in New York City and places approximately 500,000 children at risk of developing significant health problems as adults," said Citizens' Committee for Children of New York Executive Director Jennifer March-Joly. "The new Green Cart legislation proposed today will help to improve the health of hundreds of thousands of New York City children by bringing healthy, affordable food to communities most in need."

"The Food Policy Task Force has created a new forum to develop policies across City agencies that have a positive impact on what New Yorkers eat," said Food Policy Coordinator Ben Thomas. "The Green Cart legislation will introduce a new way to bring healthy food to New Yorkers. By partnering with Food Trust and the Food Bank, we will also find new ways to bring supermarkets to New York's neighborhoods."

If the Green Cart legislation is enacted, applications for these carts and more information on how to apply will be available by logging onto the Health Department web site at [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov) or by calling 311. Priority would be given to people currently on the permit waiting list, as well as disabled veterans, disabled persons and veterans.

#### *The Office of the Food Policy Coordinator*

The Office of the Food Policy Coordinator was established by Mayor Bloomberg in January of 2007. The Food Policy Coordinator is responsible for convening the Food Policy Taskforce and coordinating the efforts of City agencies to improve access to healthy food. The Food Policy Task Force was convened with the goal of increasing access to healthful foods for low-income New Yorkers, and is comprised of representatives from the Speaker's Office, [Department of Education](#), Health Department, [New York City Human Resources Administration](#), and the Council on the Environment of New York City.