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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. It is a beautiful day in New York City and it's Earth Day. We are really excited about this because this is such an important day each year, to focus on what we need to do to survive, what we need to do to protect the Earth, protect the future generations of this city, of this Earth. And we have the power to make such an impact. And we're going to talk about that today. A bunch of exciting new announcements that are going to really, really help address climate change here in this city. And so, we're going to focus on Earth Day. We're going to focus on climate change today, and certainly many times ahead in this year.

But every day, first, we'll go to what we talk about every day, which is the fight against COVID. And my hope and prayer is as this year progresses, we'll be able to talk less about COVID and more about the future. But right now, we still have to win this battle against COVID once and for all. And that means getting vaccinated, it is the key. So, the good news is more and more vaccination sites. The good news is more and more outreach efforts, making it easier and easier, more and more places where you just walk up. We're going to have a lot more to say on that in the coming days. But let's give you today's number – since the beginning of the vaccination effort, 5,943,896 doses given. That's almost six million doses now. So, again, New York City keeps moving forward and you're going to see in the indicators later on, what an impact vaccination is making. Because the indicators keep getting better and better each day. So, let's stick with it.

Okay. Now we're going to talk about climate. We're going to talk about how climate actually is central to a recovery for all of us. Because recovery for all of us doesn't just mean a great 2021 or 2022. It means bringing the city back strong for the future and making it a city that treats everyone fairly, protects everyone equally. When we talk about climate change, we understand it's a threat to all of us, particularly the impact is felt in frontline communities. So, often that means communities of color. That means immigrant communities. That means lower income communities that bear the brunt here in New York City in America, around the world, that bear the brunt of climate change. So, when we think about fighting inequality, we need to think about the fight against climate change as absolutely linked. So, we have throughout this week, been talking about major announcements that will help us move forward, fighting the climate crisis. Just to review them on Monday, I expressed my opposition, complete opposition to two fracked gas peaker plants in Astoria and Gowanus because I believe it's time to break our dependency on fossil fuels once and for all. So, we don't need new plants. And as we've talked about, we're going to be passing legislation to end new fossil fuel connections in the city in 2030. So, getting off of fossil fuels is the beginning of everything we have to do. Tuesday, our huge investment, our huge commitment to hydropower, to renewables in all forms, but hydropower is going to be the key to providing the electricity to run the City government of New York going forward. We're going to get that done in the next few years. That's going to be a big step for renewable

energy in this city. Yesterday, we talked about geothermal energy. Geothermal energy is something that we have not tapped into. It's one of the promising elements of renewable energy, but it hasn't gotten the attention it deserves. There's tremendous opportunity here in this city to do it. We're now going to go boldly into geothermal on top of hydro, on top of wind, on top of solar, because we need to push all the buttons as it were. We need to move on all these fronts to get off of fossil fuels.

Okay. That brings us to today. So again, job one, get away from fossil fuels. And that means challenging the way the fossil fuel industry has honestly brainwashed us for decades and decades. There's been a consistent effort by the fossil fuel industry to tell us everything's okay when it's not okay. There's been a consistent effort by the fossil fuel industry to tell us they're making things safe and green when it just isn't true. So, the City of New York will be filing a lawsuit against Big Oil. In State Supreme Court, we're specifically targeting Exxon, Shell, BP, and the American Petroleum Institute, which is the trade group for Big Oil. And this is clear that the petroleum industry has violated New York City's consumer protection law. Because the law guarantees truth in advertising. And what has happened here is effectively false advertising. A clear effort to mislead, a consistent decision to engage in deceptive trade practices. We've all seen it with our own eyes. And it's time to be clear about it and to fight back. And we are going to use the courts as the way to fight back.

The petroleum industry created a multi-prong consistent green washing campaign in New York City to convince us of something that wasn't true and was dangerous. And by presenting themselves as leading the way in the fight against climate change, while every single day deepening the climate crisis, through their actions, that contradiction that falsehood has to be exposed and more pressure has to be put on this industry. So, in fact, we have all suffered from the pollution caused by the fossil fuel industry. We've suffered deeply, New Yorkers have suffered in so many ways in terms of their health and wellbeing, but also the danger it creates to our future. And in fact, their products do not help us address climate change. They only make it worse. So, we're going to go at them. And the numbers that we're going to present in court are staggering. Exxon, BP, and Shell combined have produced – this is just an unbelievable number. They have produced 108 billion tons of carbon dioxide since 1965. So, this is unacceptable. It has to end, and we're going to go to the courts for justice. So, my message to Big Oil is New York City will see you in court. And we intend to fight back against what you've done to all New Yorkers.

Okay. Now, second major announcement. This is so important because as we prepare for the future, we need to get off fossil fuels and we need to turn to all of the approaches that will help us be greener all the time. And that means zero emission vehicles, crucial to the equation, turning to zero emission vehicles and New York City will lead the way. Today, I'm committing to 100 percent electric school bus fleet for New York City by 2035. Again, want to emphasize, our school bus fleet takes our precious school children to school. We see them all over town. That school bus fleet will be 100 percent electric by 2035. Now we're going to be phasing in, starting immediately, 75 electric buses over the next two years. And our new public school bus company, NYC Bus, is taking the lead in this effort on an accelerated timeline. All of their school buses will be electric by 2030, by the end of this decade. So, I want to thank everyone at NYC Bus for showing it can be done and helping to move this incredibly important initiative forward. We are doubling down in every way on reducing emissions and reducing pollution from the City fleet. Last year, I signed an executive order that we would have an all-electric City fleet by 2040. We

want to keep pushing the spectrum on that. Moving faster and faster. And the school buses are going to be crucial. And boy, you know, what reminds us of so many good things more than the school buses? So, it's so great to know that they will be leading the way to a greener future. School buses are crucial. And I don't know if you guys can hear that, who are watching on TV. I hear some honking outside. I think there's somebody in the lot outside honking their horns a lot. Let's go to our newest morning briefing correspondents out in the City Hall parking lot, Chancellor Meisha Ross Porter and the new Director of the Office of Climate Sustainability, Ben Furnas. Can you hear me, Chancellor?

Schools Chancellor Meisha Ross Porter: Good morning, everyone. Happy Earth Day. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. You should be very jealous that you're not out here with the Sustainability Czar Ben. Today, we're so excited to introduce to the world our first electric bus. This is such an important investment in New York City, such an important investment in New York City public schools, and more importantly, so much of an important investment in our families and our communities. Today, this bus will become a part of what over the next 20 years will be 100 percent of our fleet going fully electric. And Ben and I know what it means to go electric. What an exciting morning. I want to thank so many people. I want to thank our CEO of NYC Bus Matt Berlin, Council Member Dromm, Speaker Treyger, Chair – Speaker Johnson, Chair Treyger. I'm so excited about this bus, I don't know who to thank. But we're so excited to be out here. It's a great day for New York City and I'm going to pass it over to our Sustainability Czar Ben – it's electric.

Director Ben Furnas, Mayor's Office of Sustainability: Thank you so much, Chancellor. You know, if we are in a sprint. We can't afford to waste any time in the fight against climate change, and that is why this bus is going to be heading out on the streets and carry children next week. And that is why over the next two years, we're going to be bringing 75 more electric buses to the streets of our city. You know, electric buses mean clean air for our kids. It means clean air for the neighborhoods where they drive. And it's all part of our vision to electrify the City fleet and move beyond fossil fuels. I want to thank the Chancellor and the entire staff at DOE, and NICE Bus for all the incredible partnerships so far. And I want to thank Speaker Johnson, Council Member Dromm, and the whole City Council, and all the activists and parents and community organizations that have felt so passionately about this. You know, the Mayor's Office of Climate and Sustainability is so excited to roll up our sleeves and get to work, to make the vision of an all-electric bus fleet a reality.

Back to you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you so much. Happy Earth Day.

Mayor: Thank you. Happy Earth Day, Ben. Happy Earth Day. Chancellor, very excited out there in the parking lot. And also, I believe there was a cultural reference to the famous dance, the electric slide there in her invoking it's electric. So, check your cultural references, everyone. But the Chancellor and our director, Ben, really are emphasizing that this is part of how we make real change right now. Now, we've got to make it in every part of people's lives, which means if we're going to have more electric buses, if we're going to have more electric cars, we need more charging stations. This is something to the great credit of President Biden, who's taking an incredible, bold stance on climate change. And in his infrastructure vision, there's a real focus on more and more charging stations all over the nation. Well, we're going to get to work that right here, now. And we're working with the City Council to expand the existing law, because, right now, in New York City, it's hard to find an electric charging station. It should be part of every

place that people go. And so, we're going to work on a new law with the Council to require that all new parking lots and garages have electric vehicle charging, that every spot has to be ready to have electric charging installed as we build out, and that new spots have to come with electric chargers. Many of them at least have to have electric chargers already installed from the very, very beginning. This is how we move forward. I want to give a special shout out and thank you to Council Member Justin Brannan, who has sponsored this legislation that's going to help us move forward. He is a true environmentalist, who's focused on these issues. This is the real work we have to do to change people's lives for the better to make it easy to find an electric charging station. So, this is how we build green infrastructure. This is how the Green New Deal here in New York City actually comes to pass, and we all get to experience it.

Now, number three, when we talk about a greener future for this city, we've got to use every tool, every approach, and we've all got to be a part of it. So, one of the things that suffered – in so many ways, we all suffered during the pandemic, and a lot of things couldn't happen during the pandemic, and there's a lot of things we couldn't afford during the pandemic. We're now, thank God, able to start bringing back some of the approaches we need to fight climate change. So, today, some very exciting news – we will be resuming our curbside composting program in New York City. It is coming back. It was on hold during COVID, but now, thankfully, we have the resources to bring curbside composting back. Now, we're going to start right away. Enrollment will begin in August in the communities that previously had curbside composting. Collection services will begin in October. We're encouraging buildings to opt in. This is going to be all on an opt-in system. And we think this is going to be the right way to restart the organics effort and the composting effort. And 3.5 million New Yorkers had access to the service previously, so we'll be bringing it back to them.

Now, I want you to hear it from our Sanitation Commissioner and two members of the City Council who have been so active, leading the fight against climate change in so many ways. They're going to speak, but we have another special guest speaker who wanted to say something about the organics effort being restarted and compost being restarted. I'm really, really happy to have the special guests with us.

We'll turn here to my left and go ahead – the bin is here.

You know, I'm confused. I was told the bin had remarks. And, clearly, it's a bin. It's a very good-looking, sleek bin, but with nothing to say.

Okay, I think we should turn to the Sanitation Commissioner, then. He always has something to say, and the people of this city love what he says. So, our Sanitation Commissioner Ed Grayson.

Commissioner Edward Grayson, Department of Sanitation: Good morning. And thank you, Mr. Mayor. I don't know if I can be as dynamic as the bin, because, to me, the bin says it all. We are completely excited about this announcement today. We are happy to be here today. It's Earth Day – 51st anniversary of Earth Day. And it's an exciting time to be part of these incredible restorations you're announcing, sir.

Our efforts to send zero waste to landfills is an important part of achieving the climate goals. We are committed to a clean and sustainable city, and it is what is needed to protect our children and our future. As the Mayor mentioned, the curbside program will be back at available for residents

to opt in. And, beginning in August, all the community districts that were part of it before the suspension will have an opportunity to opt in via our portal, and those collection services will begin in October. And we're looking very – we're looking forward to this approach. We think this is the right way to get back into the curbside program and it's very exciting.

But we are announcing so much more today. The community composting program, which is the popular neighborhoods sites where people of the neighborhood are operating for – again, an opt-in, a voluntary program throughout the neighborhoods of the city – will grow by double. We currently have over a hundred sites, and we're excited to say that we expect to have over 200 sites. And these sites, to put it into context, have collected over 1.3 million pounds of organic material over the last seven months. And if we can double the sites, we can do even more than that. It's very exciting. These are great programs and we're committed to make sure that we have these sites available in every community district in the city.

We will be also piloting all new smart bins for additional opportunities for the public to, again, participate in organics. These smart bins will be also available through an app – download an app and register for the product. And you'll be able to go to one of these smart bins located throughout the city to access the – use your app to access the bin and deposit your organics material. This is another exciting new way to expand our knowledge of how the waste stream will move and give that access and opportunity for organics disposal and organics collection to move us forward on our goals.

School curbside composting is coming back to the nearly 1,000 schools that had it pre-pandemic. We're very excited about this. Naturally, getting into the schools, working with the youth, making them understand the nature of the culture of sustainability and how they can make that scalable in their own daily lives is very important. And getting back into schools for the next fall on the full organic service that we had pre-pandemic is an important step forward in continuing that great work. We're looking very forward to that partnership with DOE.

We'll also begin offering new reuse swap events and additional opportunities for neighborhoods across the city to donate recycled clothing and textiles. We're increasing by a factor of six, the number of safe disposal events that we will host throughout the city, moving it from the two per borough per year into making sure that we have one per community board district every single year. And our special waste drop-off sites that were – that have been closed since the pandemic will resume this July, starting to take material every week as we had pre-pandemic. Having this opportunity for the residents of this city to bring and properly dispose of these household hazardous materials is so critical to keeping our workforce safe, but also doing right by the environment – another excellent step forward that I'm so happy is happening.

All of this is all set on keeping as much waste out of the landfill as possible and taking the critical steps forward in, you know, over the rest of 2021 and onward into getting back to our goals of zero waste, achieving zero waste, and setting the pathway forward, building a future that everyone can get behind. We are not only in the waste business. We are in the sustainability business. We are providing an example and an opportunity for all the communities and all the residents of New York City to make good choices, to make the right choices, to make the choices for our future. And these announcements today, these service restorations today, and this expansion of some of our community programs today is very exciting and completely the breath of fresh air we need as we all recover. Thank you, sir.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Commissioner. Hey, Commissioner, I loved what you said – it's true, the Department of Sanitation is in the sustainability business and has been a leader in this nation in terms of innovative approaches. Thank you for the extraordinary work you've done over years and years at the Sanitation Department. But, as always, thank you to the men and women of your department who do so much to make this city work every day and to make it greener every day. And this is going to be a big step forward.

Now, I want you to hear from two members of the City Council who have been absolute leaders in the fight against climate change and have helped them move a really important progress in this city. First of all, obviously, on the topic of electrifying school buses and, you know, having an electric school bus fleet as a leading edge of getting off of fossil fuels and getting away from emissions – really exciting, and who will understand the power of that than a former New York City public school teacher who has done such extraordinary work in the field of education. Was the Education Committee Chair in the Council, now the Finance Chair – my great pleasure to introduce Council Member Danny Dromm.

[...]

Mayor: The wheels are in motion. Okay, I saw what you did there. Thank you, Danny. And thank you for your leadership. And you're right, it's about protecting us all against the climate crisis. It's also about the health of our kids, because fewer admissions means healthier kids, less asthma, you know, more we can do to protect those who are so precious to us. Now, I want to hear from another Council Member who has been a leader on organics, he's someone who really understood what we had to do to keep building up composting in this city. And I know he is like, I am – we are personally obsessive composters and want to see this program come back strong in New York City. And he is sponsoring the legislation to help us expand the sites all over the city. My pleasure to introduce Council Member Keith Powers.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you, Keith. And Happy Earth Day to you and all the residents of StuyTown and Peter Cooper Village. I know it's an incredibly civic-minded community that you're a part of. And I love the fact that, you know, people have kept going no matter what, and now everyone will be able to be a part of this whole citywide initiative again. So, thank you for your leadership in making it happen.

With that, we turn to some more good news, because, again – I'll always preface by saying, we've got a long way to go, we've got a lot of work to do, but the indicators continue to be really, really promising. So, let's go over them. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – today's report, 167 patients. Confirmed positivity down to 44.57 percent. And hospitalization rate, 2.59 per 100,000. So, we want to keep driving that down below two, but real progress in recent days for sure. Now, number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average – today's report, 1,964 cases. Look at that graph, that is really good to see. This is very promising. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19 – today's report, on a seven-day rolling average, the lowest we've seen in a long, long time, 4.54 percent. Why? Because of vaccination – because of vaccination. Because we're almost at 6 million vaccinations given in the City of New York. It is

working. You can see the cause and effect really clearly here. And what am I going to tell you next? Go get vaccinated. If you haven't yet, it's the perfect time to do it, because you can help us drive back COVID and push it out of this city and get our life back to a better place. So, vaccinations working, indicators move in the right direction – very, very promising news we're seeing.

Okay. A few words in Spanish. I'm going to go back to the day we are celebrating today, Earth Day, with my green tie. Very, very fashion appropriate today.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're joined today by a Chancellor Porter, by Commissioner Grayson, by Corporation Council Jim Johnson, by the Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate and Sustainability Ben Furnas, by Dr. Chokshi, and by Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. First question today goes to Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hello? Hello. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Hey, yeah, Katie, how you doing today?

Question: I'm doing great. Thank you. The still have you talking to a garbage can, that will be a gift that keeps on giving. It's going bring to lot of laughs. Thank you for that.

Mayor: I'm glad you see deeper symbolism in it.

Question: No, we just put it up to Twitter. We'll see what happens. My first question is a little bit unrelated. It's actually for the Chancellor. I don't know if she could answer remotely while she's on a remote work out there on the bus, but it's about I know –

Mayor: Well, Katie, just to let you – I'm sorry to interrupt, that the Chancellor is not on remote at this moment – She is? She is. Okay, go ahead, Katie.

Question: Great, so I know you've been pushing Summer Youth Employment, but my question is specifically geared to students within District 75 who have variant challenges, and they have usual special accommodations at CBOs and other places for support. So, is there any guidance on – I know a lot of the students because of COVID they've lost their seats to do this work learning and especially for summer employment, so is there any update or guidance regarding District 75 community-based work programs which have been halted because of COVID?

Mayor: It's a really, really good question, and I'll turn to the Chancellor, but Katie, we're saying we're every day reconstructing coming out of the pandemic and going back and seeing what we can restart. So, I appreciate this question because it's something we need to focus on. I do know that the Chancellor's approach is very universal, the most universal approach to summer we've ever seen. What we're talking about this summer for general education kids in special education kids is the most comprehensive approach to summer programming and support for kids and

families in the history of department education. So, it certainly should include a variety of ways of helping special ed kids. Chancellor, you want to speak to this question?

Question: Sure. Good morning, everyone. And Katie, I made it off the bus. It was so exciting this morning. We are working to ensure that all of our students have access to some work, but to your question, we really want to make sure that our special education students, our District 75 students get all of the supports and resources. Particularly to your question about the work-based learning, we'll come back to you with that. We're still working out the details of our summer program but expanding work opportunities is a critical part of that.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Katie.

Question: Thanks. And [inaudible], I know that the compost program is going to resume in the community districts that had it previously, do you know if there would ever be a plan, I guess when you leave office, but to expand more fully across the city, which I know it was the original goal?

Mayor: It was, for sure Katie, and look composting, again, I'm personally very committed to it. We're going to put up a video later on to show you what we did back at the beginning of the administration to encourage people to compost. Me and my family did a video, which I cherish. It's something we do need to get to a city-wide level over time and we need to get people connected to it. It is – it takes some work. It takes some getting used to for a lot of people, but it's totally, ultimately an easy, straightforward thing to do. It's really important for the goal of zero waste to landfill. We've just got to figure out the way to implement it citywide in a way that'll work, and this was the first step that made a lot of sense that we could move on right away, because we had a great infrastructure in place, and again, thanks to Ed and his team, that we could restart immediately. But we'll now be working after this on how to keep building out across the city.

Moderator: The next is Marcia from WCBS.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I have noticed that you have changed. You ride the Cyclone, and you wear a Yankee hat. You talk to bins.

[Laughter]

You talk about the Electric Slide. I'm wondering what has changed your mood? Is it the fact that you see the end of the tunnel, light at the end of the tunnel because of COVID? Is it because you no longer feel you're under the thumb of Governor Cuomo? And by the way, can you do the electric slide?

Mayor: Marcia, that's a very controversial question. I have had a rich exposure to Electric Slide, but I'd need to – I'd need some practice, but I've been in a lot of rooms where Electric Slide was being done. So, I have a great – I love that song, and I'm a fan for sure. The Yankee cap thing was once in a lifetime. Let's just be clear about that. That's a – that was a patriotic moment. I was very appreciative to Yankees. I did it. I want to tell you Marcia, I don't know if you caught this nuance that day, but, you know, everyone knows I grew up in Massachusetts a Red Sox fan, and one of the most horrifying moments in Red Sox history was Aaron Boone's homerun in 2003.

And so, I put on the Yankee cap and the first thing that I saw after putting on the Yankee cap was Aaron Boone, like, literally, himself, right across me saying, hey that looks really good on you. And I said to him, you're making it even worse. So, it's a – that was once in a lifetime.

But Marcia look, the reason – there may be more than one reason, but I'll tell you the number one reason to me is the city's coming back, and we went through something incredibly tough and painful. And I got a lot of empathy in me, and I felt the pain of the people of this city, and it was very, very tough last year. And then this year has been just joyous because we're coming back and people are like, you know, just helping each other out and optimistic and doing great things and making things happen, and it just feels like a joy to be a part of it. So, that to me is the number one reason, we're living in a really special moment in the history of city, and this is going to be the greatest comeback in New York City history, and that's what's giving me a lot of new energy for sure. Go ahead, Marcia.

Question: So, given the fact that you're thrilled about COVID and the fact that we seem to be coming out of it, my question has to do with masking. Do you see a point when you can say to people, you don't have to wear your masks outdoors anymore, and do you think it's something that you could hold out as sort of a carrot to get people to get vaccinated? That if you all get vaccinated, if we reach a certain number, then you don't have to wear masks when you go to outdoor events. Do you see that happening and is there a timeframe?

Mayor: I think that's a really good point, Marcia. The – first of all, what I've said, Dr. Chokshi, Dr. Varma, Dr. Katz, we've all said the same thing. Let's start with the assumption that we're going to hold the line through June. June's the date that we've set to hit our vaccination goal. June is, you know, one of those times in the year that we're used to sort of a reset moment every year as we get to the end of school, beginning of summer and all. We want to hold the line through June. So, we'll keep, you know, the masks on and we'll do all the things we need to do. After that we'll be able to reassess. And I think you're right, that one of the things we can say to people is, if you want to get rid of the masks, if you want to get rid of the social distancing, if you want to get rid of the restrictions, go get vaccinated. And we're going to have to keep masks and restrictions in place until we're a 100 percent sure we're out of the woods, and the best way to know where out of the woods is to see those vaccination numbers go up and up and up, because you've seen already just with the number of people vaccinated so far is just pushing down COVID and pushing down the cases and making the city safer. So, I think you make a good point. I think there is an incentive in that, and we'll keep making that point clear to people.

Moderator: The next is Pat Kiernan from NY1.

Question: Mayor de Blasio, good morning. Thank you for taking my question.

Mayor: How are you doing Pat? This is very late in the day for you.

Question: I – well, I'm always here watching the briefing. I'm confused about what the, the allegation is in this oil lawsuit, because we have an entire planet that's addicted to oil, and we're all aware that it's terrible for the planet. Can you clarify how the city is going to try to pin that addiction on three specific oil companies? Because they aren't the oil company – only oil

companies that are doing business in the city and these three are singled out in your remarks earlier.

Mayor: Pat, it's a great question. I'll start, and I'll turn to our Corporation Counsel Jim Johnson, who can explain it more to you, but look, I think the bottom line is this. Remember this city's very important role, historically fighting for consumers. This is one of the places in this country where the idea of consumer rights really grew. And this was one of the leading places in the efforts to stop big tobacco, to hold them responsible for what they had done, including through advertising to hook, you know, generations of young people to cigarette smoking. And there was a lot of success in court with efforts to say that the advertising, the conscious effort to mislead had horrible human impact. We've obviously seen that in another way with opioids, and again, you've seen very successful court actions against the opioid manufacturers, who again, told people it was okay when it wasn't okay. So, these companies specifically have egregiously broken our laws when it comes to protecting consumers and we believe we have an opportunity to do something here about it, and it also contributes to the bigger recognition that we're still not being told the truth about climate change by the fossil fuel industry. With that I'll turn to Corporation Counsel Jim Johnson. Jim – I think I'm turning to him.

Corporation Counsel Jim Johnson, Law Department: All right. I am here. Thank you –thank you, Mr. Mayor, and you got it just to right. What we're doing here is focusing on representations that these companies made in New York City to New York City consumers. There are many things that can be said, but when it comes to a product that you're selling, you have to tell the truth, you can't leave out important information, and you can't try to persuade the consumers that you're something that you're not, and that's what has happened here. Consumers are entitled to make choices about a variety of things, and many consumers are very concerned about climate change. And so for the oil companies to tell them one thing when the truth is actually another, as they're making these choices about whether or not to purchase fossil fuels as opposed to use alternatives, and whether or not to decide against it for one company as opposed to another, the statements that suggest that these are green partners, these companies are green partners, that the purchase of the gasoline with its special additives is somehow going to actually decrease the admissions that lead to climate change, when every single purchase in use of gasoline actually contributes to the greenhouse emissions that lead to climate change, well that's wrong and it has to be stopped. We're doing our part here and similar suits have been brought in other places across the country.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Pat.

Question: So, my follow up would be related to your use of an SUV, Mayor de Blasio. Is that a gasoline vehicle and is it filled up but either a BP, Shell, or Exxon station?

Mayor: Pat, that vehicle is – it's a hybrid vehicle. We can get you all the specifics, it runs on electricity a lot of the time. I don't know where it's filled up, but I do know a lot of the time it's charged with the electric charging station right here in the City Hall parking lot. And again, you're going to see more and more of the city fleet go electric. So, we're moving away from fossil fuels constantly. I led the charge – I'm very proud of this – led the charge to divest New York City's investments from fossil fuels, billions and billions of dollars we took away from the fossil fuel industry, and that actually helped spark other places in the country, and even London and Paris to divest from fossil fuels. So, we're quite clear about we're breaking the dependency

more and more every day in this city, and I think it's something we need to push in every way we can, including this legal action.

Moderator: The next is Dana from the New York Times.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I was just curious to learn more about the opt-in element of the composting program that's going to resume, because wasn't it formerly opt-in. I mean, it was always volunteer. So how is this the construct of the resurrected program distinct?

Mayor: Dana, I thought you were going to start with saying, I'm curious to know what the bin thinks about this. And you know, I talked to – we were going to give the bin another chance, but the notion here, and I'll let Commissioner Grayson talk to you about how it's going to work, is to say we're going to cover the same areas again, but households, buildings opt-in specifically so we get a sense of how much demand there is. We want to really get this right and we know some people are ready to participate right now. You know, I'm going to be back at my home in Brooklyn starting on January 1st. I'm looking forward to participating in organics directly, but other people are not into it or not ready for it or, you know, don't have the space right now or whatever it may be. So, we want to pinpoint literally building by building who's in, who's out, so we can structure this properly. Commissioner?

Commissioner Grayson: Thank you, sir. And yes, that's exactly the entire purpose of an opt-in approach. While yes, before the program was in those community boards and it was voluntary, so to speak, the idea now is to get back out there within – you would register for the program and we would do pinpoint routing, so that makes it much more precise. Keeps our truck traveled down. Let's us go out and service all of the people who want to be involved while we continue to solicit better behavior. Number one, on the watch my neighbor, do the right thing, and I have the opportunity to also join in, you know, when it fits my household, give us time to build on the messaging, give us time to get some real metrics that can help us make a more scalable product for when we're ready to go back to a really robust program again, which is the future of where this waste stream has to go for climate change and for our zero waste goals, but that's the difference. The difference is we are looking to solicit, you know, a constituent base who would register for the program, ask for service. We would service those stops and build on that as more and more people registered for the program.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Ed. Go ahead, Dana.

Question: Thanks, and then just to follow up, it seems like you are targeting a sort of smaller base, do you have any projections on like how many tons of organics you'll be collecting versus how many the city collected in the former – under the former model?

Mayor: I'll turn to the Commissioner on the initial projections, but Dana, I think this is going to be something that grows quickly. I really do. We, you know – last year so much was disrupted and people were just trying to make sense of so many challenges, plus the budget crisis we were going through, et cetera. Now we're in such a better situation. We start this up on a very, very large level again. I think a lot of people participate instantly. I think the more we educate people, the more and more people come into it, and then keep building towards city-wide and make this something that will be truly a citywide and consistent and part of our future. Take some time, but

I think it's going to add up to a lot over time. Ed, why don't you talk about what your initial projections are?

Commissioner Grayson: In the last full year of our curbside program pre-pandemic, that program yielded over 50,000 tons of organic waste diversion from landfills. And as you said in your question – your first question, it was a voluntary program. We are very optimistic that as it grows and become scalable, that we can see that kind of diversion again and even more so. The key for us is to continue building the community networks, giving the local access, so in conjunction with this tailored opt-in program for curbside service, the expanded community composting sites that will also be offered and the expanded opportunities to recycle, we'll see basically a huge impact on what we're diverting. To say cursory numbers, we're expecting to get eventually all of the people who wanted to be part of the program back. So, that initial baseline number of where we were is what we think is an achievable goal, but it will take time to build as more and more people avail themselves to the program, understand how it's going to work, and that's why our key cornerstone on lead up to it is going to be messaging to get the word out, to encourage people to opt in where we formally were.

Mayor: Thank you very much.

Moderator: Next is Steve Burns from WCBS 880.

Question: Morning. Mr. Mayor, I'm guessing the Yankee hat you referenced is in the bin next to you, but feel free to give me a –

Mayor: Is it organics? I don't think so. Commissioner, the Yankee cap would not go into the bin? No, and I would never do that to a Yankee cap. Steve, I have a different affiliation, but I still respect the Yankees organization, even though they're going through a very difficult time and I want express the pain that I'm feeling as the Yankees go through this very difficult moment. Our hearts are with you. I'm sorry, Steve, that was a digression. What was your question?

Question: That's very admirable of you, sir. I wanted to go back to this lawsuit and kind of follow up on some of the line of questioning that Pat was getting at. I mean, New York is still very much addicted to the products that big oil is selling. Car traffic is back to pre-pandemic levels or even exceeding it. New York remains, in general, very friendly to cars, giving millions of free parking spaces, placards, and all kinds of policies that allow general friendliness to car driving. So, I think the question a lot of advocates are going to have when they see this lawsuit it's not enough to just simply encourage bikes and buses and other modes. There has to be some amount of discouragement of car use. It's kind of a policy question as well. If we want to get away from big oil, what can the city do to actively discourage car use here given that's the message you want to send?

Mayor: So, really good and big question, Steve. I'm going to frame it a little bit differently though. I think we're in a transitional time. First of all, huge point electric vehicles versus non electric vehicles. As we get more and more renewable energy, as more and more vehicles become electric and you see this happening – I mean the President Biden has put a very, very positive, ambitious goals out for reducing emissions and focusing on electric vehicles, renewable energy and all that. We got to remember that that's a different ball game now. So, if people are going to be using vehicles, whether it's a school bus, you know, a city bus, their own personal

vehicle, all taxis, if more and more of them are electric and based on renewable energy, that's a different reality, and one we certainly will leave space for. But I think with that as something to keep in mind, we would say, first of all, the best way to get people out of their cars or even convince them they don't need a car – like me, I'm not going to have a car when I leave office – is just keep doubling down on mass transit, more busways, select bus service, you know, ferry service, you name it, Citi Bike, all these things that get people in alternatives so that don't even need cars to begin with. Zipcar, we've been creating spaces for Zipcar and companies like them to car sharing. I do think creating the positive alternatives so people don't need a vehicle, and then recognizing that vis-a-vis parking, we have asked for people to pay appropriately for parking more and more, and also we're using a lot of those spaces for other very important things, outdoor dining, for example, more and more city bike stations. I think we're creating a lot of that balance. I don't think it's, you know, one thing in sort of check the box. I think there's a lot of different strategies that all come together to reduce car use. Go ahead, Steve.

Question: Thanks, and in kind of the same vein that debate is playing out in a specific sense for the future of the BQE. I know that's something your administration is still trying to work through. How does that context kind of play into this debate where we evaluate the future of cars and how many of them we still want circulating, especially through some of those really dense neighborhoods?

Mayor: Another great question. I talked to our Transportation Commissioner, Hank Gutman earlier in the week about the BQE, and he and his colleagues at DOT are putting together a new vision for how to approach that. Obviously starting with protecting the BQE as we have it now and making sure it's available in the coming years, but then figuring out where we're going, and one of the things Commissioner Gutman has talked about – very consistent with your question is, you know, re-envisioning the whole approach as we look to a future where we hope to have a lot less dependency on individual car use, and again, to the extent we have cars and trucks and buses, hopefully more and more electric and running on renewable energy, but we do need to be thinking 10, 20, 30 years ahead as we make our plans on the BQE. We're going to have more to say on that in the next couple of months, both how we protect it in the short term, but also a very different vision for its future and what it's going to mean for us.

Moderator: The next is Jessica Gould from WNYC.

Question: Hi, thanks. This is for Chancellor Porter. I know that the decision to have the standardized state test came from the federal government. But we're hearing about repeat passages from previous tests in the ELA test this year, as well as some schools that only have like a handful of kids coming in. I've heard of some schools where nobody has opted in. So, I was just wondering how that impacts to what extent the test will be used for admissions or anything else in the coming year. Do you have an answer about how the test will be used this year?

Mayor: Chancellor? Could you hear that?

Chancellor Porter: Yep. I heard it. So, we, you know, the state is looking into the, they, they are responsible for the creation of the test and we're responsible for the administration of the test, which we've done. As far as admissions for next year, you know, this has been a very different year as it was last year, and, and we believe that the test cannot be a single measure appoint

missions, and obviously this year, it can't be as well, and so we're looking at multiple measures to make admissions decisions and more information to come on back.

Thank you very much. Go ahead, Jessica.

Question: Okay, great. Thanks, and this is from my colleague Jake. He says today, the City settled a lawsuit with a black woman who was shackled to the hospital bed while in labor, three years ago. She received \$750,000 from the City. But attorneys for the women said the NYPD's patrol guide is still vague on this practice and they worry the same thing could happen again. Should the patrol guide be updated to ensure that pregnant women cannot be shackled during labor and should the officers involved face discipline?

Mayor: Jessica, I need to look. It's a great question and I appreciate it, and obviously I think that that was inhumane and we don't want to see that ever happen again. I will check on whether the patrol guide either was at the time or since has been amended to make clear that's unacceptable. I think in terms of any discipline issues, I got to get briefed on what happened, but also what the patrol guide to do because of an officer's following the patrol guide and the patrol guide is wrong, it's not the officer's fault, it's the larger decisions that were made. So, we will get back to you shortly. I think it's a really important example of something that needs to change and if it has not been changed already, we will change it for sure.

Moderator: We've got time for two more for today. The next is Yoav from the City.

Mayor: Yoav?

Question: Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, how're you doing?

Question: In the context of the George Floyd killing, it and the important role that the video played in revealing what happened, I wanted to ask you about similar videos here of police encounters that result in civilian deaths. There's been a number of instances where you've declined to watch those videos personally even though it's the most objective piece of evidence of what happened, and additionally – I'm thinking of two cases, the killing of George Zapantis and Kowalski Trawick, they also revealed that the Police Department was, at minimum, misleading about the circumstances that led to that person's death. I'm wondering specifically, have you seen those two videos, but more generally when a civilian dies in a police encounter here, why don't you as a matter of course, if there's video, why don't you review it?

Mayor: Yoav, I appreciate the question. I don't agree with your initial characterization. I've never taken the position that I wouldn't look at the videos. I've looked at many such videos and not just tragedies where someone ended up deceased, but other situations as well I've, I mean, I just want to be careful you're not misunderstanding. I look at videos all the time and I certainly will look in these two cases, but I don't think it's a blanket rule. I think when there's a specific issue that I think I need to look into, or there's deeper public concern about, the norm is I look at them, but again, we're trying to create a lot of different ways to ensure things are done right. It's why we have strengthened the Civilian Complaint Review Board. That's why we have a discipline matrix. That's why we have a lot of different ways to make sure that officers use minimum force, that we deescalate. You know, there's lots of different pieces going on here. Not

just does the Mayor end up watching a video, but I certainly have looked at a lot and I'll look at these two as well for sure. Go ahead, Yoav.

Question: Thanks. You know, just to follow up. I mean the most recent example I'm thinking of was the killing of Delrawn Small, which by now occurred five years ago. I know you were asked on WNYC a number of times if you had seen the video and you essentially said, there's no purpose in it. You don't want to opine because it's in process. But one of the – you know, you're one of the few people who can actually hold the NYPD accountable. The case has taken a long time to get to trial. You're in a role where you could, you know, you're not going to put your thumb on the scale of what happens, but you could say, “I want this resolved quickly” and it would be resolved quickly. So, have you seen that video yet? And if not, why not?

Mayor: I believe I saw some of the video. I don't think I saw all of it, but I'll double check that. But, again, Yoav, I just want to be clear, the last point you said about putting your thumb on the scale – there were multiple levels of due process including in courts on that case, and then further, the CCRB wanted to pursue it and they are, that is moving forward. So, I just think we got to recognize that the things we all want to see, that if something happens, there's a full investigation. If something needs to go to the courts, that the courts have a full trial due process out in the open, if something should be pursued by the CCRB, that happens – all of that is happening in this case, and the results have been clear and some people don't agree with the results, but they have been clear. So, again, if I see something that I feel I need to know more about, I'm going to do that. But when I see a system functioning where all the kind of due process, all the kind of investigation, all the kind of follow-up is happening. I think that's what we've been all trying to achieve here. I think that's the whole point. Go ahead.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Alex Zimmerman from Chalkbeat.

Question: Hi everyone. My first question is for the Chancellor. You know, I wanted to follow up on a line questioning that Jessica Gould was asking about. You know, obviously we've seen these reports that many of the questions on the state tests are being recycled, and that students I've seen them before, and so taken together with, you know, other aspects of the test that have obviously changed this year, including the fact that they're completely optional, like, do you think the tests are going to mean anything? Like, will they convey any important information to you as, as the leader of this system?

Mayor: I'll start and turn to the Chancellor. I'll just say, I think it's an extremely aberrant situation this year. I think you're right to point that out, Alex. This – we've never had a situation like this, it's obviously because of the pandemic. Yeah, I think we're going to see it as different than anything we've dealt with before and, you know, make judgements accordingly. Go ahead, Chancellor.

Chancellor Porter: No, I agree with the Mayor, you know, we are in a very, very different time and in this moment, and so the test will give us information that we will use to inform how we support students. Families made decisions about taking the test because they wanted that information, and so we look forward to supporting them and using the information again, as we make decisions about how to support student learning.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Alex.

Question: Yeah. My second question is just about sort of looking ahead to the fall. Obviously as a supermajority of parents are still learning remotely and there are lots of big questions about what remote learning could look like next year and how many families will choose that if it's offered. I'm just wondering if the Chancellor can give an update on the City's thinking in terms of what that remote option would look like, whether it would be run centrally, whether it would be sort of individual schools' responsibility to run it, and just whether there'll be any sort of like parent or school engagement from the DOE on what that looks like. It's a question a lot of people have, and, and also just a tiny follow-up to the last question too, is just, do you know how many students have opted into state tests?

Mayor: Okay. on that one, I don't, if the Chancellor does, she'll let you know, but we'll keep you posted on that. But to the bigger point, your timing is impeccable Alex, because the Chancellor and I were just having an animated discussion yesterday at the DOE cabinet meeting about what we see for September, and I'm going to start and turn to the Chancellor. Look, we're making a lot of progress now because of the high level of vaccination, we're seeing real progress, the data and the science are speaking to us. You know, the cases are plummeting. Thank God. We're not out of the woods. The variants are still out there. I'll give all the qualifiers. I know Dr. Varma, Dr. Chokshi are listening, that they will insist rightfully on those qualifiers, but overall, we're making a lot of progress and, you know, a huge number of people getting vaccinated each week.

It is too early to be able to tell you everything about September, but I can tell you this much. We want every child back in the classroom and we're planning on every child being back in the classroom, and, you know, a lot could happen between now and September, and we don't want to speak for all parents. We know that some of them may still have tremendous sensitivity and concern, and we're going to work with that. But the goal, the thing we're planning on is if every single one of our children – million children's showed up on opening day of school, that we would be ready to accommodate them, and we're going to do whatever it takes to be able to give them a safe, positive environment. Chancellor.

Chancellor Porter: So, I'll start backwards and say that the test data about who's testing today is not public. It is a process, and we'll have that information at the conclusion of the testing period. I am also a parent who has to make the decision about September, and I am really looking forward to having my daughter be back in school, full time. That's what I hope for our system. That's what we're working towards. But again, we're always going to ground ourselves in putting health and safety first. We've made a lot of progress, got a lot of vaccines in arms, and so our goal and our move forward is thinking about reopening our system in a new way that, you know, really ensures that our students feel affirmed and welcomed back and sees themselves in the curriculum. We absolutely will be engaging families. As a parent myself, I know how important it is to have parents at the table as we make these decisions, and we're already starting internally to have conversations about what returns should be and will be for our system, and I look forward to many, many, many more animated conversations with the Mayor about that, because this is, this is the most important thing for the city to do right now.

Mayor: And I want to emphasize we are animated because we were in fierce agreement. We want, and we're planning on every child coming back. That really is the goal, and I'm telling you, based on what we're seeing these last few days on the COVID indicators, it's a realizable dream. I really believe that a lot more to do.

Hey, as we conclude, I just want to see if can the camera go to this other chair for a moment. I just want to make a point about, you know, the bin really let us down. The bin asked for an opportunity to speak and then just you know – I mean, I, yeah, you can bear silent witness if you want, but I just thought that was really a lost opportunity. So, to Ben Furnas, Climate Sustainability Director, just want to thank you. I know you would never do that to us.

Director Furnas: I would not, sir.

Mayor: I know you care. I mean the bin, what was that? Okay. So, I just want to say, you know –

Director Furnas: I for one am incredibly excited to have the brown bins back. I don't know if that means I'm on Team Bin, but –

Mayor: Okay. I'm fine with that. But, Ben, I just want to say is the last time I allow an inanimate object to speak to one of my press conferences. Okay. I think I've learned something valuable today. I hope it's less than all of you as well. Thank you. Take care, everyone.

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