January 10, 2020

Mayor Bill de Blasio
Council Member Carlina Rivera, District 2
Commissioner Mitchell Silver, NYC Parks & Recreation
Commissioner Lorraine Grillo, Department of Design and Construction

Re: Closure of the East River Compost Yard

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Council Member Rivera, Commissioner Silver, and Commissioner Grillo,

Diverting NYC organic waste from the landfill is the most achievable goal in reducing New York City’s massive solid waste problem; promoting community-based models in urban sustainability is a key component to helping solve our environmental problems. The Lower East Side Ecology Center (LESEC) has dedicated 23 years to diverting organic waste and helping to solve our environmental problems.

The Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board (MSWAB) urges you to rethink the decision to convert the East River Compost Yard (ERCY) to a temporary lawn and, instead, allow the ERCY to continue functioning as is until 2023, when the reconstruction of the site is scheduled to begin.

The LESEC is unparalleled in NYC efforts to reducing waste and pivotal in reaching the now delayed 0x30 goals. Weekly, the ERCY processes EIGHT TONS of food scraps from 10 city-wide drop-off locations representing more than 3,500 households. That means 416 TONS of waste is being diverted from the landfill annually. If NYC is truly invested in reducing waste and greenhouse gasses, and committed to being fiscally responsible, NYC would stop the destruction of the ERCY and promote similar compost projects throughout the city.

NYC has fallen behind in waste reduction efforts. The LESEC is a solitary success in the City’s fight to combat climate change. It is a small sacrifice to forego the temporary lawn for a much more valuable end of reducing waste. At the very least, the compost operation should be relocated so that Manhattan residents can continue to reduce waste by composting their food scraps.

Sincerely,
Matt Civello, SWAB Chair, & Chris Johnson on behalf of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board

MSWAB
The Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board (MSWAB) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to helping NYC achieve its zero waste goals. We advise the Manhattan Borough President, City Council and City Administration regarding the development, promotion and operation of the City’s waste prevention, reuse and recycling programs. Appointed by the Manhattan Borough President’s Office, we are comprised of solid waste management industry, sustainability professionals, and concerned citizens.