



February 22, 2008

Dear Council Members:

We the undersigned 101 religious, health, social service and advocacy agencies are writing to express our unequivocal support for the recently introduced Green Cart legislation.

As you know, escalating rates of obesity, diabetes and heart disease are plaguing New York's low-income communities. Not unrelated, these communities tend to have the least access to fresh affordable food – called “food deserts,” low-income neighborhoods often have no supermarkets, farmer's markets, or other fresh food outlets within walking distance. As a result, families have little choice but to buy unhealthy ‘convenience’ foods, most of which are packaged and processed – and overpriced.

Green Cart legislation aims to change that. By creating 1500 new permits for vendors to sell fresh fruits and vegetables in underserved neighborhoods, tens of thousands of people will now be able to conveniently purchase affordable produce close to their homes. For the first time in decades, fresh produce won't remain the exclusive commodity it has become, available only to some neighborhoods, or to those with the resources to travel to those neighborhoods.

In addition to having great health benefits, the Green Cart legislation will also create 1500 new jobs – first priority given to Veterans and the disabled – as well as spur increased cooperation with New York State Farmers.

A small minority of opponents may argue that the produce vendors will compete unfairly with current business owners. This is untrue. First, the vendors will be sited specifically in areas that otherwise have little access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Second, bodega owners in targeted neighborhoods will be allowed to own the Green Cart permit to have a vendor outside their store. Third, while supermarkets may be a better long-term solution, supermarkets take years to site and develop, while a vendor program can be operable in just months.

This is a win-win piece of legislation: Green Carts will have a positive health impact on adults and children, reducing disease and creating healthier communities, new jobs will be created, and local growers will have expanded markets.

We strongly urge you to support this vital piece of legislation, and help to create a healthier, more vibrant, New York.

Sincerely,

Citizens' Committee for Children of NY  
Abyssinian Development Corporation  
ACORN  
Added Value and Herban Solutions  
American Cancer Society  
American Diabetes Association  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association  
Association to Benefit Children  
B'nai Beshurun  
Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center  
Broadway Community, Inc.  
Bronx Health REACH  
Brooklyn Rescue Mission  
Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center  
Center for Best Practices in Childhood Obesity Prevention/  
Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of NY  
Center for Family Life Sunset Park  
Children's Aid Society  
Children's Defense Fund NYC  
Chinese American Planning Council  
City Harvest  
Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, Inc.  
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families  
Community Vision Council  
Council of Senior Centers and Services  
Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action  
DREAM Charter School  
Early Childhood Associates  
East Harlem Partnership for Diabetes Prevention  
and East Harlem Diabetes Center of Excellence  
East New York Farms  
East Side Settlement House  
El Flamboyant Community Garden  
El Puente Beacon in Brooklyn  
Family Cook Productions  
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies  
Fifth Avenue Committee Inc.  
Food Bank/ FoodChange of New York City  
Food Systems Solutions, LLC  
Greater NY Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Southern Brooklyn Health Coalition  
Harlem Children's Zone  
Harlem Goes Veg!  
Harlem Health Promotion Center @ Columbia University  
Harlem RBI  
Harlem United Community AIDS Center  
HealthCorps  
Henry Street Settlement  
Howie the Harp Peer Advocacy Center  
Hunger Action Network of New York State  
Institute for Family Health  
Just Food  
Karp Resources  
La Familia Verde  
Make the Road New York

Medical and Health Research Association of NYC  
Montefiore Medical Center  
Montefiore School Health Program  
More Gardens!  
Morris Heights Health Center  
Mount Sinai Medical Center  
Neighborhood Outdoor Exercise for New York, Inc.  
New York Aids Housing Network  
New York Business Group on Health  
New York Chapter 2 of the American Academy of  
Pediatrics  
New York Chapter 3 of the American Academy of  
Pediatrics  
New York City Food and Fitness Partnership  
New York City Nutrition Education Network (NYCNEN)  
North General Hospital  
Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership  
NYC Coalition Against Hunger  
NYSHEPA  
Overcoming-Love Ministries (OLM)  
Phipps Community Development Corporation  
Play 4 Life, Inc.  
Pragati, Inc.  
Pratt Center for Community Development  
Project for Public Spaces  
Public Health Association of New York City  
Public Market Partners  
Safe Space  
Slow Food USA  
South Bronx Food Cooperative  
Spoons Across America  
St. Barnabas Hospital  
St. John's Bread and Life Program, Inc.  
Staten Island Mental Health Society, Inc.  
Supportive Housing Network of New York  
Teachers College Columbia University, Center for Food &  
Environment  
The Columbia Center For Children's Environmental Health  
The Cypress Hills Child Care Corporation  
The FGE Food and Nutrition Team  
The New York Immigration Coalition  
The Live Light...Live Right Program at Brookdale Hospital  
The Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center  
The Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty  
Thompson Health/Family Health & Wellness  
United Neighborhood Houses of New York  
United Way NYC  
Urban Health Plan  
Urban Public Health  
Visiting Nurses Services  
We ACT!  
Weeksville Heritage Center in Crown Heights  
Youth Represent  
YWCA-NYC