



Date: November 19, 2021
To: Budget Committee
Re: BU35.3 - 2022 Rate Supported Budgets - Solid Waste Management Services and Recommended 2022 Solid Waste Rates and Fees

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) and our supporters across the city understand that solid waste management is a critical environmental service and central to addressing climate change locally.

We are writing to encourage this Committee and City Council to stay focused on providing robust waste education and communications for residents as critical aspects of an effective waste strategy.

Last year, Council voted to eliminate a core communication and educational tool: the annual waste calendars. We raised concerns during the rate-supported budget process that while this may seem like a quick way to save money, research shows that many Torontonians, especially seniors and those without internet access at home, rely on those calendars as valuable sources of information.

While Council eliminated the waste calendar, fortunately, it also directed staff to restore other critical printed materials and to undertake more detailed evaluation to ensure that proper recycling and waste information is not just being broadcast, but being understood and resulting in higher waste diversion. **We're happy to see that evaluation is detailed in the staff briefing note and we urge Councillors to pay close attention to the results and to ensure that going forward, waste communications are expanded, not cut.**

The education portion of the Solid Waste budget also includes funding for the Single-Use and Take-Away Item Reduction Strategy. This strategy has been in development for a number of years and has strong support from Torontonians, as shown during multiple rounds of public consultations. Council passed the first phase of the strategy last summer, and in the coming months, significant education and communications will be essential to helping Toronto businesses shift away from single-use items towards lower-cost and less wasteful reusable alternatives.

Research from other cities, and preliminary results from our own research in Toronto, shows that small businesses are ready to reduce waste, however they need guidance and support to make the right decisions. For example, there are many misconceptions about public health guidelines for reusable dishes, and many people don't realize that single-use containers labelled as compostable are, in fact, not compostable in Toronto's system. **We urge Councillors to consider the importance of clear communication to Torontonians and outreach to businesses, and ensure that the Single Use and Take-Away Items Reduction Strategy has sufficient resources.**

Whether it is at home, or out in the community, educating and engaging residents and businesses is critical to meeting Toronto's waste reduction goals. In addition, engaging Torontonians to recycle right and reduce waste will not only cut costs for the city, but will also contribute to a resilient, local, circular economy that meets important community and climate goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Alfred". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Emily" and the last name "Alfred" clearly distinguishable.

Emily Alfred
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