



**District of Columbia
Department of Public Works
Office of Waste Diversion**





District of Columbia's Recycling Mandate and Enforcement

Since 1989, the District has mandated all businesses, including offices, schools, apartment buildings, and churches, as well as residential homes, to separate trash from recyclable materials.

Commitment to Sustainability

- This regulation reflects the District's longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

Enforcement of Regulations

- Enforcement mechanisms ensure compliance across sectors, reinforcing the importance of separating trash and recyclables.

Focus of Presentation

- Explore the evolution of these regulations, enforcement efforts, and their pivotal role in achieving the District's zero waste goals.



Recycling and Enforcement in the District of Columbia

Recycling is a cornerstone of Mayor Bowser’s commitment to achieving zero waste in the District of Columbia. It is mandatory for multi-family buildings, single-family households, and businesses. Under District law, multi-family buildings must provide their residents with trash and recycling programs that meet the District’s requirements. Non-compliance can result in fines ranging from \$75 to \$300 for a first violation, \$300 to \$600 for a second violation, and \$500 to \$2,000 for a third violation, depending on the requirement.

SWEEP: Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program

The Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program (SWEEP) is the enforcement arm of the District of Columbia Department of Public Works. SWEEP enforces the District’s sanitation and recycling regulations as outlined under D.C. Law 6-100, District Code of Municipal Regulations (DCMR) Titles 21 and 24, and D.C. Law 7-226.

SWEEP plays a dual role in maintaining the cleanliness and environmental health of the District. The program is responsible for educating the public on proper waste storage and disposal practices and enforcing compliance through civil Notices of Violations (NOVs) for non-compliance by residential and commercial entities.

Enforcement Procedures

SWEEP inspectors issue a Notice of Violation (NOV) when they observe a violation or investigate a complaint that results in a violation. Inspectors have the discretion to issue a warning ticket before issuing a ticket with a fine, but this is not required by law. Once an NOV is issued, the recipient must respond according to the instructions provided. It is important to note that, unlike tickets issued by other agencies, abating the conditions that led to the NOV is not grounds for dismissal of the ticket. This emphasizes the importance of compliance from the outset to avoid penalties.

The Zero Waste Omnibus Amendment Act of 2020 passed by the D.C. Council in late 2020, includes several ambitious requirements for the Department of Public Works Office of Waste Diversion

1. Source Separation Plans for Large Commercial Entities (§ 8-1031.04(b)(1)):

- The Act mandates that large commercial entities have source separation plans in place by January 1, 2022. These entities include multi-family dwellings with 80 or more units, commercial buildings with 10 or more units, and businesses or nonprofit organizations with 101 or more employees. They are required to submit a Source Separation Plan , updated annually, outlining the steps the property owner will take to comply with recycling requirements.

2. Source Separation Training and Outreach Programs (§ 8-1031.03(f)(1)):

- By January 1, 2022, DPW was required to develop training and outreach programs for janitorial staff and property managers. Training materials, including fliers, checklists, and instructional videos, were published and are available on the Zero Waste DC website. These materials are distributed upon request and proactively during on-site visits and community engagement events by Recycling Outreach Specialists. Specialists are also available to conduct in-person or online training sessions.

3. Solid Waste Collections Reporting (§ 8-1031.05):

- The Act requires solid waste collections reporting from haulers using District transfer facilities. All registered haulers must report the required information through the Solid Waste Collectors Registration and Reporting System. Enforcement of this requirement is managed by the Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program (SWEET).

4. Surcharge on Contaminated Recycling Loads (§ 8-1031.11):

- The Act mandates a surcharge on the disposal of contaminated recycling loads at transfer facilities. Although inspections of recycling loads began following the implementation of the Zero Waste Omnibus Act, pandemic-related staffing shortages led to the reassignment of inspection staff and a temporary halt to inspections. In May 2023, the Office of Waste Diversion re-staffed seven solid waste monitor worker positions to screen incoming recycling loads for contamination at the Fort Totten Transfer Station.

Commerical Recycling Outreach

Background:

- Because DPW only services single-family households, OWD hasn't been directly involved in multi-family or commercial recycling outreach.

Status:

- In September 2023, OWD hired 6 Recycling Outreach Specialists to play a key role in increasing waste diversion by developing and distributing education and outreach materials.
- Multi-Family Zero Waste Guide was mailed to 700 large multi-family properties with 80+ units. This guide was originally published in 2021 and has been slightly updated to include the new Source Separation Plan requirements for large multi-family buildings (modeled after similar required forms in Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Arlington County) and battery disposal ban information.

Key Stats:

- Estimated **200,000+ multi-family households** and **800,000+ employees** in the District.



Multi-family buildings such as apartments, condominiums, and cooperatives must fulfill the District's trash and recycling requirements. Understanding what is required of your building is important to make sure that you are compliant.

Inspectors periodically visit buildings to ensure compliance. Buildings that are not in compliance with trash and recycling requirements may receive warnings and/or violations with fines from Department of Public Works (DPW) inspectors. Fines range from \$75 to \$300 for a first instance of non-compliance to \$500 to \$2,000 for a third instance of non-compliance, depending on the requirement. For more information on each requirement, check out the Multi-Family Zero Waste Guide, as well as additional tools and resources available at zerowaste.dc.gov.



HAULING

- All trash and recycling must be hauled by a company that is licensed as a solid waste collector with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and is also registered with DPW's Office of Waste Diversion (OWD).
- Trash and recycling must each be picked up a minimum of twice per week.



CONTAINERS

- A sufficient size and number of containers are necessary to collect all trash and recycling so that there is no overflowing material and that all lids can close properly.
- Trash and recycling containers cannot be damaged, including having holes or missing lids.
- No trash or recycling can be littered around containers. Only broken down cardboard may be stacked neatly next to recycling containers.
- Containers must be labeled with the hauler's name, phone number, and the size of the container.

For more information about recycling in the District, visit zerowaste.dc.gov
For general information about the Department of Public Works, visit dpw.dc.gov

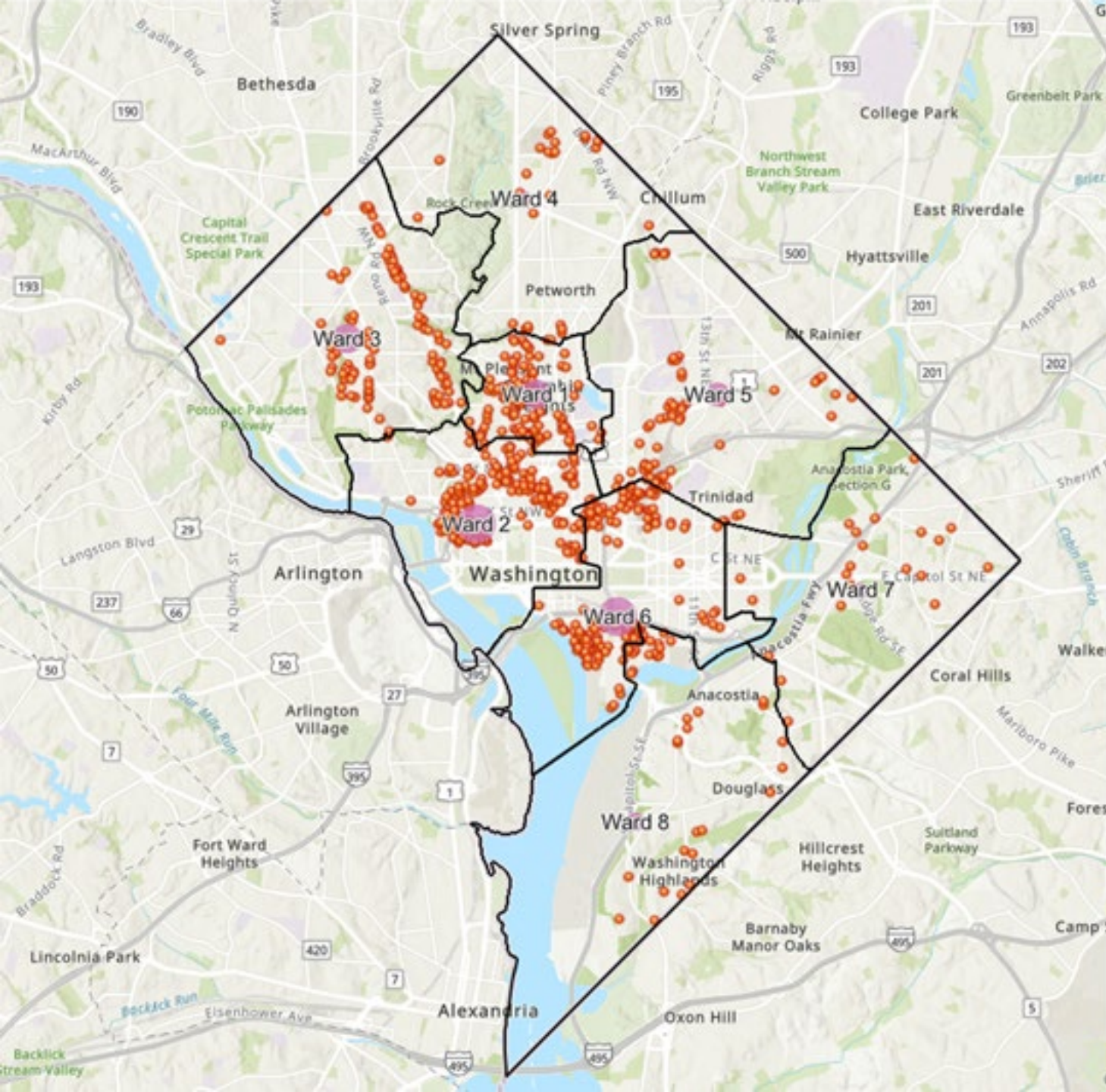


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OWD recently hired six new Recycling Outreach Specialists onto our team whose job is to do proactive outreach to multi-family buildings to help property managers understand their obligations regarding recycling requirements. They've been doing site visits where they assess if the building is compliant with recycling laws and, if not, help them understand how to come into compliance so they won't be fined. Their current portfolio is focused on multi-family dwellings with 80 or more units.

Starting on January 1, 2024, a new recycling requirement went into place per the passage of the Zero Waste Omnibus Amendment Act of 2020. **Multi-family dwellings with 80 or more units must submit an annual source separation plan to the Department of Public Works (DPW) outlining steps the property owner will take to implement compliant recycling programs.** Source separation plans were due April 1, 2024.



Map of Multi-family dwellings with 80 + units

As per the requirements of D.C. Code § 8–1031.04 we started with 80+ multi-family residential buildings .

There are 689 buildings which we split among each of the six ROSs.

Ward	80+ Unit Building Count
1	105
2	189
3	102
4	29
5	61
6	149
7	21
8	42



MULTI-FAMILY ZERO WASTE GUIDE

Supporting Multi-Family Recycling in the District

DPW is dedicated to assisting multifamily properties in adapting to new regulations and establishing successful recycling programs. To facilitate this, DPW has launched a comprehensive Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit available online at zerowaste.dc.gov/resources-multi-family.

Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit

The toolkit includes the "Multi-Family Zero Waste Guide," which serves as a central resource for understanding all recycling and trash requirements for multifamily buildings. Developed with support from TRP funding, this guide encompasses case studies and best practices to aid property managers, janitorial staff, and residents in achieving compliance and sustainability goals.

Additional Resources and Support

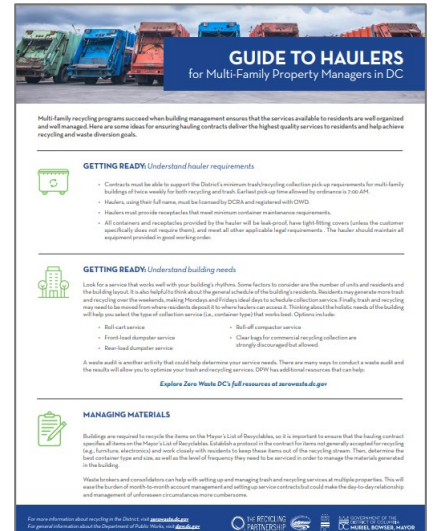
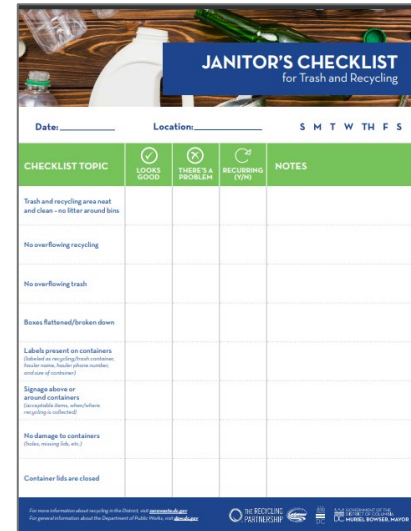
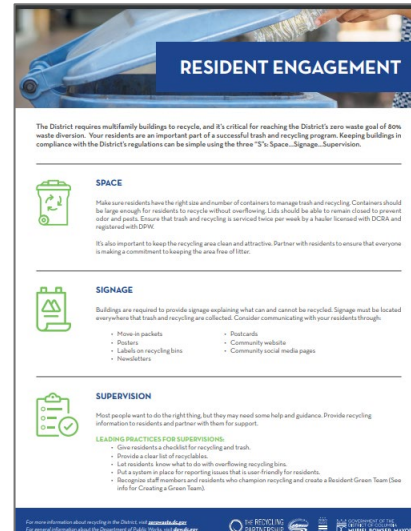
In addition to the Zero Waste Multi-Family Guide, the toolkit offers specialized resources on topics such as hauling for multi-family buildings and training tools for property managers, janitorial staff, and residents. These resources are designed to streamline the implementation of recycling programs and ensure adherence to District regulations.

Furthermore, our team of Recycling Outreach Specialists is available to collaborate with multifamily and commercial buildings, assisting them in the submission of their required source separation plans. This proactive outreach aims to foster compliance and maximize participation in the District's recycling initiatives.

By providing comprehensive tools and personalized support, DPW aims to empower multifamily properties in the District to effectively manage waste and contribute to the city's zero waste objectives. For more information and access to the Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit, visit zerowaste.dc.gov/resources-multi-family.



Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit



To access the complete Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit and Multi-Family Zero Waste Guide, visit: zerowaste.dc.gov/page/resources-multi-family

Solid Waste Registration & Reporting

Background:

- Re-launched in 2018, this program requires all Solid Waste Collectors operating in DC to register with and report to OWD.

Status:

- Solid Waste Collectors are required to register by February 1 each calendar year and report your tonnages for the previous calendar year by February 1.
- OWD is working to improve compliance with reporting requirements to improve collection of citywide data.

Key Stats:

- As of February 2023, there are **126 approved Solid Waste Collectors** (both registered and reported)



Solid Waste Collectors Registration and Reporting FAQs

As required by the Sustainable Solid Waste Management Amendment Act of 2014, DC Official Code [§ 8-1031.05](#) and [§ 8-1031.06](#), all solid waste collectors who operate in the District of Columbia will be required to register and report annually with the Office of Waste Diversion in the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Do I qualify as a Solid Waste Collector?

Any business, non-profit, or government entity engaged in the collection or transportation of garbage, refuse, trash, or any other waste or waste product (including recyclable, compostable, or otherwise reusable materials) in the District is considered a solid waste collector.

Solid waste collectors include:

- Refuse or trash collectors
- Recycling collectors
- Food waste collection companies
- Landscapers and other collectors of yard waste
- Fat, oil, and grease collectors
- Textile collectors
- Electronic waste collectors
- Businesses with approved self-implementation plans
- Other collectors of any type of solid waste

Solid waste is garbage, refuse, trash, or any other waste or waste product (including recyclable, compostable, or otherwise reusable material) resulting from an industrial, commercial, residential, or government operation or community activity. Solid waste may be in a solid, liquid, semisolid, or contained gaseous state.

I already have a license with DCRA; do I have to register with the DPW Office of Waste Diversion? Yes.

These requirements are in addition to any licensing requirement of DCRA.

I am registered with the DPW Office of Recycling; do I have to register with the DPW Office of Waste Diversion? Yes.

This new process will replace and expand upon the registration and reporting process that was previously undertaken by the Office of Recycling.

The Impact of the Solid Waste Collectors Registration and Reporting Program

Program Overview The Solid Waste Collectors Registration and Reporting Program is a critical initiative in the District of Columbia aimed at monitoring and regulating the activities of solid waste collectors. Mandated by DC Official Code § 8-1031.05 and § 8-1031.06, this program requires all solid waste collectors operating within the District to annually register and report to the Office of Waste Diversion (OWD) in the Department of Public Works.

Importance of the Program This program plays a pivotal role in enabling OWD to produce the Annual Solid Waste Diversion Report for the District. This report includes crucial metrics such as residential and citywide waste diversion rates, essential for monitoring and improving the city's environmental sustainability efforts. However, challenges persist as many commercial waste collectors operate without proper registration and reporting, hindering accurate tracking of the citywide waste stream.

Registration and Reporting Requirements Businesses, non-profits, and government entities involved in garbage, refuse, or waste transportation must register with OWD. After registration, solid waste collectors are obligated to report annual solid waste and recycling tonnages, diverted materials, and facility usage by February 1 each year. The Solid Waste Collectors Registration and Reporting System facilitates data tracking and management, designating approved status to compliant collectors. In FY 2023, there were 133 approved solid waste collectors, reflecting a 12.71% increase from the previous year.

Enforcement and Compliance In 2023, OWD issued a total of 108 warnings to non-compliant solid waste collectors. Subsequently, SWEEP issued 58 violations to 29 companies for failure to comply with program regulations. These enforcement actions underscore the program's commitment to ensuring adherence and accountability among waste collectors operating in the District.

The Solid Waste Collectors Registration and Reporting Program is indispensable for the District's ability to effectively monitor and regulate waste collection activities. By enforcing compliance and improving data accuracy, the program supports the city's waste diversion goals and promotes environmental sustainability across the District of Columbia.

Solid Waste Collector Registration and Reporting

Details:

- All solid waste collectors in the District of Columbia must register and report annually to the Office of Waste Diversion, Department of Public Works.
- Mandated by DC Official Code § 8-1031.05 and § 8-1031.06, with final rulemaking on December 22nd, 2017.

Registration and Reporting Requirements:

- **Registration Deadline:** February 1 each year.
- **Reporting:** By February 1, solid waste collectors report tonnages from the previous calendar year.
- **Annual Reporting Cycle:** Begins January 1st; covers solid waste and recycling data for the preceding calendar year.

Enforcement Process:

- Identification of non-compliant collectors:
 - Solid waste collectors failing to register.
 - Solid waste collectors failing to report tonnage data.
- Coordination with SWEEP and OAH to issue notices of violations for non-compliance.

Solid Waste Collectors Decals:

- Approved collectors receive welcome letters and vehicle decals for each registered vehicle.

Approved Solid Waste Collectors List:

- Once registration and reporting conclude, DPW's Office of Waste Diversion publishes a list of approved solid waste collectors.



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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SOLID WASTE DIVERSION ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2022

Addressing Unreported Tons of Solid: In developing the CY18-22 Solid Waste Diversion Report, the Office of Waste Diversion (OWD) estimated that 33 percent of citywide solid waste went unreported between 2019 and 2022. To account for these "missing" tons, OWD devised a methodology based on historical waste projections, population growth in the District, and the material composition of reported waste. **Efforts are ongoing to track down the actual values, particularly within the commercial sector.**

Increasing Enforcement Efforts: Citywide waste disposal data is not yet being fully captured. To address this, OWD and the Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program (SWEEP) are ramping up enforcement efforts to enhance reporting and registration compliance. These efforts aim to ensure more comprehensive tracking of citywide solid waste. Additionally, there are plans to revise the program to include not only solid waste collectors but also solid waste facilities.

Recycling Contamination Screening

Background:

- In 2020, OWD hired Solid Waste Monitor Workers to screen and track incoming contaminated recycling loads at the Fort Totten Transfer Station.
- Any haulers found to have a load that is >18% contaminated will be charge the tipping fee for trash plus an administrative fee.
- **Status:**
- Due to budget cuts, this program was suspended but was relaunched September 1, 2023.
- 6 screeners are currently employed by OWD.

Key Stats:

- In August (before the fine system launched), roughly **one-quarter** of all recycling loads were determined to be contaminated.



Contamination Screening Process:



Screeners assess the contamination level of recycling loads, determining if they are over or under 18% contamination using a grading scale.

Contaminated Load Protocol:

- Contamination Level:** Loads over 18% contamination are reclassified as trash.
- Fees:** Haulers are charged the trash tipping fee of \$70.62 per ton, plus an administrative fee of \$12.25, totaling \$82.87 per ton. This contrasts with the recycling fee of \$51.59 per ton.
- Disposal:** Contaminated loads over 18% are directed to refuse disposal instead of a materials recovery facility.

Billing and Notification:

- Invoice Adjustment:** Loads reclassified from recycling to trash will have invoices updated to reflect the higher cost.
- Electronic Notification:** Upon request, haulers will receive electronic notices detailing the reclassification, including accompanying documentation and pictures.

Communication & Education



Documenting and communicating with haulers about contamination will help them understand the extent of recycling contamination and identify how much of their recycling is affected. This process also creates opportunities for outreach and educational assistance through the Office of Waste Diversion and the Department of Public Works.

Thank you!

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To learn more about the District's zero waste programs and services, visit zerowaste.dc.gov



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