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NEW YORK CITY WASTE ASSOCIATION NAMES KENDALL CHRISTIANSEN FIRST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 6, 2017 – New York, NY – New Yorkers for Responsible Waste Management (NYRWM) today announced the appointment of **Kendall Christiansen** as its executive director.

Ben Velocci, president of NYRWM and principal of Avid Carting said, “NYRWM is delighted to have Kendall as our first executive director. His local and national experience, knowledge, perspective and reputation in our field is unique and will expand the local waste management industry’s ability to be well-represented in the public dialogue over how this vital system should be organized in the 21st century. As DSNY prepares to commit \$8 million to study how to restructure this vital service – which already functions effectively – NYRWM is poised to present its ideas on how the city’s goals can be achieved without disrupting an entire industry, jeopardizing family-owned small businesses, threatening the livelihoods of hundreds of workers, and inevitably raising costs for our customers.”

Christiansen said, “I am honored to join NYRWM at this critical juncture in municipal policy discussions regarding the future of this essential industry. The waste and recycling services sector is remarkably dynamic and a reliable and effective partner with the city in daily managing wastes generated by its businesses and institutions. As materials and products have changed and the processing of technologies and markets for recovered materials has evolved, New York City’s waste services companies have adapted successfully, including processing what DSNY itself collects. In fact, the industry is poised for another round of innovation.

“The administration’s stated intention of restructuring the existing competitive open-market system in search of uncertain benefits is already stifling investment, innovation and normal industry consolidation. New York’s 108,000 commercial businesses currently enjoy considerable choice and the benefits of competition among providers which generate better service and lower costs.”

NYRWM’s member companies are engaged in all aspects of collecting, processing and managing solid waste, recyclables, organics and other materials generated by New York City’s commercial, institutional and industrial sectors; they also process and manage some of what is collected by the Department of Sanitation (DSNY).

Organized in 2016, the primary focus of NYRWM is to address the city's proposed plan to restructure the commercial waste industry into zones to be serviced by a single company, a concept known as franchising.

DSNY estimates it would take six or more years to plan and implement a new structure, which effectively freezes the status quo in place at a time when the industry is working cooperatively with the city to advance recycling rates and initiate the diversion of organics.

Since adoption of the Trade Waste Act in 1996, the industry has been regulated by the Business Integrity Commission. The city's long-time practice of setting rate caps has continued along with a two-year limit on contracts to enhance customer choice. In recent years, the waste industry has experienced significant consolidation, recommitted itself to safety for the public and its employees, is partnering with the city to improve commercial recycling and manage organic wastes differently, and pursuing numerous other initiatives aligned with the city's goals.

"Until now the benefits of customer choice and competition have vastly outweighed truck-related considerations, especially since private-sector waste collection trucks are less than one percent of citywide truck traffic, operate almost entirely at night when there is less traffic, and steadily becoming cleaner and safer," said Velocci.

Nearly all of the companies active in this sector are locally-owned, many of them family-owned small businesses spanning generations. They provide much-needed employment for hard to employ New Yorkers. Most of the major companies have unionized workforces that pay workers well above minimum wage for their difficult and unappealing work.

"Given the current state of affairs and broader industry trends, it's difficult to see how the uncertain benefits of districting and exclusive franchises would apply to New York's already efficient and competitive system. We intend to work with the city's key stakeholders and decision-makers to more fully assess the wisdom of the city's intentions, analyze options and propose alternate paths to the same goals," said Christiansen.

Kendall Christiansen previously served as manager of the NYC Chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association. Since launching Gaia Strategies as his consulting practice in 1992, Kendall has worked with many companies in the field locally, nationally and in Canada. He was a founding assistant director of the city's recycling system and a vice president at the public affairs firm of Geto & de Milly, Inc. Kendall also chaired the Citywide Recycling Advisory Board, is a long-time member of the Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board, and serves on the board of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, CASES, and as long-time chair of New York Congregational Community Services and Nursing Center.

For more information about New Yorkers for Responsible Waste Management, please visit NYRWM.org.