

STATEMENT OPPOSING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SOLID WASTE ORDINANCE

BY COUNCIL MEMBER KWAME KENYATTA

June 6, 2006

Today, I voted against the introduction of the substitute Ordinance to Amend Chapter 22 of the 1984 Detroit City Code, Handling of Solid Waste and Prevention of Illegal Dumping. This ordinance seeks to impose a three hundred dollar fee on already overly burdened city residents for the collection and disposal of trash. There are many problems associated with the ordinance, starting with the reality that this fee-for-service model does not cover the entire cost of the service. The Administration projects that the \$300 fee would raise approximately \$67M in revenue; however, the cost for garbage collection and disposal is a little over \$100M, leaving a \$33M shortfall that must be subsidized somehow. Citizens have spoken out, loud and clear, against the fee, and I have heard them. The fee hurts multiple property owners and residents who do not generate much weekly garbage. Although the City Council was successful in taking the trash fee off of the foreclosure track, the fee can still potentially ruin a citizen's credit. Furthermore, there are outstanding questions pertaining to a citizen's ability to opt-out of the program. I opposed the fee in the Mayor's Proposed 2006-2007 Budget, and I still stand firmly opposed. While I am poised to cooperate with a sound plan to address the deficit in the Department of Public Works, it is incumbent upon the Administration to find alternatives that work and alternatives that do not oppress people. I have stated before that we cannot balance the budget on the backs of our citizens. We must be fiscally creative and we must seek avenues of relief for Detroiters. It is for these reasons that I oppose a solid waste fee and voted "NO" on the introduction of the ordinance that would establish the parameters to implement the fee.