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**Council Member Helen Rosenthal and Carlos Menchaca,
Worker Co-operative Advocates, and Worker-Owners Rally in Advance of
Council Vote on Intro. 423**

Council Members Helen Rosenthal and Carlos Menchaca will be joined by worker cooperative advocates and worker-owners on Wednesday to rally in support of Intro. 423, which will be voted on by the Council on Thursday. Intro. 423 will require the city to report on the number of city contracts awarded to worker cooperatives and the number of worker cooperatives that received assistance from the Department of Small Business Services (SBS).

Worker cooperatives are owned and managed democratically by their employees -- in other words, every employee owns an equal share of the business and plays an equal role in the business' decision-making. Worker cooperatives tend to provide higher wages, better hours, and more job security to workers than other small businesses. New York City currently has about 23 worker coops, ranging from a bed and breakfast, a bakery, child care, cleaning services, dog walkers, catering companies and restaurants, web design, and more.

The passage of Intro. 423 follows Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo's Community Development Committee hearing bringing the opportunity of worker cooperatives to light as well as the city's funding of the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative, which allocated \$1.2 million to the development of worker cooperatives across the city in the FY15 budget. This initiative has already led to the creation of new businesses and jobs in New York City.

"We live in a world where CEO's live in luxury and their workers depend on food stamps to get groceries," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**. "It doesn't have to be this way. Worker co-operatives treat every worker equally, with good wages, stable hours, and an equal share of the business. Worker co-operatives can help lift people from dead-end jobs into the middle class. I am committed to finding ways for the City to support and expand worker co-operatives, and that starts with my bill, Int. 423-A, which requires the Department of Small Business Services to report on how it engages with and supports these businesses."

"The potential contribution of worker cooperatives to the continued economic growth of our City cannot be understated," said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**. "In fact, already existing cooperatives have proven that business models focused on worker enfranchisement—especially for women and people of color—yield great results both economically, and in terms of civic engagement. It is not lost on me as Chair of the Committee on Immigration that worker cooperatives are largely made up of otherwise low-income workers, many of them immigrants. I am proud to be working alongside Council-Members Rosenthal and Arroyo, and all of my Council colleagues, to ensure that we fully understand the universe of cooperatives that exist in relation to the City's contracts, and how we can better use them as partners in conducting business."

"The New York City Council has invested significant effort and funding to bring worker owned businesses to the forefront of our economic development and income equality discourse," said **Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Chair of the Committee on Community Development**. "The Worker Cooperative reporting legislation, Int. 423, is an important addition to the work we have advanced over the last year."

"Our city's policies need to not only address affordable housing, but also connect people who live in that housing to good quality job opportunities," said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso**. "Worker co-operatives put control in the hands of working people, provide good wages and, create opportunities for entrepreneurs. The Worker Co-op Initiative and Intro 423 will help us to support co-ops that already exist and foster development of new ones, extending these opportunities to many more working people."

"FPWA is proud to support City Council Bill, Intro 423 and is deeply grateful to Councilwoman Helen Rosenthal and members of the City Council for their demonstrated leadership and commitment to worker cooperative businesses," said **Wayne Ho, Chief Program and Policy Officer at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA)**. "Worker cooperatives are a smart business model that drastically changes the lives of its worker-owners, creating upward mobility for thousands of New Yorkers. We're hopeful that Intro 423 will be the beginning of a continued collaboration with the City and worker cooperative businesses, and will help to create more jobs and a more worker cooperative friendly New York. In addition, we are excited to move forward promoting this successful small business model throughout the city through the

Council's Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative."

"Center for Family Life, a program of SCO Family of Services, is deeply grateful to Councilwoman Rosenthal and members of the New York City Council for their vision and leadership in the effort to raise up worker cooperative businesses as a valuable resource in the fight for economic equality," said **Julia J. Francois, Director of Program Services for the Center for Family Life**. "Worker Cooperative businesses are just and democratic workplaces that currently provide a variety of goods and services to New Yorkers. With the passage of Intro 423 we will see the city's commitment to provide technical support and to contract with companies that uphold the dignity of the worker-owners who provide essential goods and services."

"New York City's worker-owned enterprises are very grateful to all of our supporters at City Council," said **Chris Michael, Executive Director of the New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives**. "We believe that the City's recognition of worker cooperatives as an important source for necessary goods and services—and the City's programmatic support for worker cooperative business development—are a powerful combination and present a bold and progressive new vision for the future of New York City's economy."

"Worker cooperatives make it possible for even the poorest to pool their resources and start a successful business together," said **Omar Freilla, Coordinator at Green Worker Cooperatives**. "Green Worker Cooperatives helps cooperative start-ups make their mark on this city. Intro 423 makes that possible by allowing City agencies to finally see and recognize cooperatives for the value they bring to their communities."

"This bill will help support worker coops and other cooperative economic models in New York City," said **Susan Shin, Senior Staff Attorney at New Economy Project**. "Its passage would be a great step toward creating an economy that works for all New Yorkers."

"On behalf of Pa'Lante Green Cleaning Services, we would like to express our sincerest thanks and gratitude to Councilwoman Helen Rosenthal and to the members of the New York City Council on the passage of Intro 423," said **Ruth Martinez, a worker-owner of Pa'Lante Cleaning Service (Queens, NY)**. "Pa'Lante is a worker cooperative that is committed to creating sustainable jobs and living wages for New Yorkers in need. We are proud to service the Queens community and New Yorkers from neighboring communities. Like our name states when translated in English, we are excited to move "Forward" in collaborating with the great city of New York."

"Diaspora Destinations is deeply grateful to Councilwoman Helen Rosenthal and to the members of the New York City Council for their continued support of worker cooperative businesses in New York City and the passage of Intro 423," said **Natasha Coombs, a worker-owner at Diaspora Destinations (Bronx,**

NY). "Diaspora Destinations is a women owned cooperative that focuses on creating unique cultural exchanges with international African communities throughout the globe. We are happy to service the Bronx and look forward to working with the city to continue to provide quality services to all New Yorkers."

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