

## “Thank You, Mr. Tierney”

### NYSAR<sup>3</sup> President Welcomes Renewed Discussion Article Generates

By Jim Gilbert  
NYSAR<sup>3</sup> President

Thank you Mr. Tierney!

First things first - come to our Annual Recycling Conference and Membership Meeting! As laid out for you elsewhere in this newsletter and on-line, we once again have an excellent program for you. Now on to what I really want to talk about.

Sometimes recycling needs a rallying cry! Something that really gets our attention and the public's attention, and dare I say it our politicians at all levels from local to national, to rally around!

In 1987, at the beginning of my career, it was the Mobro 4000 garbage barge plying the Atlantic waters that really brought recycling to the forefront.

If you don't remember, look it up. The publicity surrounding its journey solidified public opinion around the then-nascent curbside and commercial recycling programs that were popping up across New York State and across the country.

Fast forward to 2015. On Sunday, October 3, Mr. John Tierney published an [Op-Ed piece](#) in *The New York Times*, one of the world's most respected newspapers. Remember that as an Op-Ed, the article is not subjected to the same degree of fact-checking as regular news. It is, after all, opinion. As we all now know, a great many of the "facts" presented by Mr.

Tierney were either misrepresented or outright false.

The reason I thank him, however, is that he has provided a new rallying point for professional recyclers, such as our members! He's the latest version of the Mobro!

Many people and organizations responded to the occasion to debunk his arguments. At last count there were over 500 replies to *The Times* on-line site. That does not include those that responded through their own mechanisms.

NYSAR<sup>3</sup> did not respond directly to *The Times*. With so many good well-thought-out responses coming in, many from organizations with far bigger profiles than us, such as ISRI and the NRC, we felt our voice would be lost in the soup.

Instead we offered to sign on to someone else's response if asked by an organization with as at least as big profile as ours. But more importantly, we decided to create a resource for our members who may have to answer to their own constituents. Now on our website, under the News tab, we have archived many of the [highest profile responses](#) on our website. If you want, you can submit your own response to us for consideration for inclusion.

So again, thank you Mr. Tierney! Like the Mobro, you have done recycling a great service! Sincerely, I hope no one ever proposes a landfill or an incinerator in your backyard!

