

County toughens carter rules

New law requires background checks, excludes companies with mob ties

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WHITE PLAINS — A law designed to keep organized crime out of the trash hauling industry in Westchester County was

approved last night by the Board of Legislators.

The law strengthens the licensing requirements for trash haulers, requiring extensive background checks and prohibiting those with a criminal record or ties to organized crime from doing business in the county. A new licensing commission will oversee the law.

The measure, which will also allow consumers to cancel unfair contracts, was approved unanimously.

"We must drive the mob out of the Westchester garbage industry," said Legislator Thomas Abinanti, D-Greenburgh, the main author of the law.

A vote on the law was delayed last month over concerns

that there was not enough time to get staff in place to enforce the requirements this year.

Now, haulers will have until March 15, 2000, to submit license applications.

The county will spend \$50,000 this year to hire an executive director of solid waste licensing. The costs to implement the law next year are not known but Abinanti said the li-

censing fees paid by the haulers should cover the county's expenses.

"The legislation is designed to pay for itself," he said.

A tougher licensing law has been in the works for two years following the indictment of Thomas Milo and his companies, Suburban Carting Corp.

and Trottown Transfer Inc. on charges that they conspired with other carters to control the industry.

Milo pleaded guilty last year to filing false tax returns and defrauding Westchester, and is serving three years in federal prison.

During a public hearing on the law in May, the head of New York City's Trade Waste Commission said garbage costs decreased 57 percent there after a similar law was enacted in 1996.

Last night, Steve Changaris, a regional manager with the National Solid Waste Management Association, said his industry group supported the law.

"Your efforts will help ensure an open and competitive solid waste market," he said.