

**Statement of the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs  
concerning  
Preconsidered Introduction T2016-4736  
submitted to  
New York City Council Committee on Consumer Affairs**

**Tuesday, July 12, 2016**

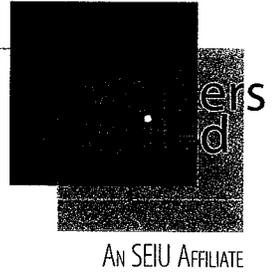
Local Law 80 of 2016 was enacted on July 28, 2016. The law added a new requirement that ticket sellers operating in New York City's public spaces obtain a license from the Department of Consumer Affairs. Under the law, ticket vendors will be required to wear their licenses openly, in addition to an outer garment that makes their profession clear. The license is valid for one year and the commissioner of Department of Consumer Affairs will be able to revoke licenses if an applicant has unanswered summons or unsatisfied fines or penalties, or if the commissioner determines that the seller's continued possession of a license poses an exigent danger to the public. The law is intended to provide tools needed to keep consumers safe without jeopardizing the tours, transportation modes and entertainments or attractions that help the city's tourism industry and economy thrive.

Local Law 80 provided a rebuttable presumption that the place of entertainment, mode of transportation or guided tour whose ticket is vended, or on whose behalf a ticket is vended, is responsible for violations of the law by those who vend tickets on their behalf. However, this presumption was intended not to apply in cases where the ticket vendor sells counterfeit tickets that were not issued by the establishment on the ticket or the ticket is vended by a seller that is not authorized or controlled by the establishment that issued the ticket. This exemption was intended to be the last sentence of section 20-559(d) in Local Law 80, but was unintentionally omitted.

Preconsidered Introduction T2016-4736 restores this exemption, which strikes a fair balance by providing an important enforcement tool while ensuring that only parties responsible for illegal vending bear responsibility for violations of the law. The administration looks forward to the enactment and implementation of Preconsidered Intro. T2016-4736 at the earliest possible date.

# LAUNDRY, DISTRIBUTION AND FOOD SERVICE JOINT BOARD

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July 11, 2016

## Testimony of Megan Chambers, Laundry Distribution & Food Service Joint Board, Workers United, SEIU

### NYC Council Consumer Affairs Committee Hearing on Intro # 697A, "CLEAN Act"

Good afternoon, Chairman Espinal and members of the Consumer Affairs Committee.

My name is Megan Chambers. I am here today to provide testimony on behalf of the Laundry, Distribution & Food Service Joint Board, Workers United, SEIU in support of Intro #697A, the "CLEAN Act".

Some 5,000 industrial laundry workers work today at more than 50 industrial laundry facilities in and around New York City, handling product that comes into contact with millions of New Yorkers, and millions more visitors to our city.

Industrial laundries are more like factories than your neighborhood laundromat. Indeed, these plants process thousands of pounds of sheets, towels, tablecloths, uniforms and other washables every hour for our New York City's restaurants, hotels, nursing homes, doctor's offices and other establishments.

Whether the laundry plants are located in the Bronx, Queens or Brooklyn, or outside the city limits, their main customers are based in New York City.

More than 300 industrial laundry delivery trucks traverse New York City on an ordinary day, collecting dirty product, and delivering clean items. Yet, there is currently no local, state or federal law to protect consumers and require that linens are actually cleaned properly, and ensuring clean products are delivered in a way that prevents contamination prior to use.

Some industrial laundry operators are responsible actors who hold themselves voluntarily to high standards of product cleanliness.

Sadly, however, industrial laundries are too often run by irresponsible operators who are willing to sacrifice quality of product for speed, in an effort to beef up their bottom line. These irresponsible operators disregard the health and safety of the consumers who come into contact with linens at restaurants, hotels and other businesses across New York City.

Of the 50 known industrial laundries in the New York City area, only five are certified under voluntary cleanliness standards set by the industry, according to a report developed by Council

Member Ritchie Torres with top researchers who have studied industrial laundries in our area and nationally.

Of course – it is very likely that there are an even larger number of laundries serving NYC. We track them to the best of our ability, and we usually identify a new industrial laundry delivering to NYC establishments a couple of times each year. But the lack of regulation and licensing means they operate outside of government scrutiny and they are hard to track.

The greater the number of unregulated and unlicensed industrial laundries lurking in the shadows, the greater the public health risk to consumers.

Frankly, we're lucky improperly handled linens haven't yet caused a documented public health crisis like Legionnaire's disease and harmed consumers.

But it would be irresponsible and wrong to wait for that crisis to happen.

Real action is needed now to prevent it.

The worst case scenario is indeed horrific. In a tragic case several years ago, five children died at a New Orleans children's hospital, infected by a deadly fungus that spread through bed linens that appeared clean. The linens were sourced from an off-premises industrial laundry. Public health experts who investigated stated it was likely that the clean linens had become contaminated during the delivery process. Their formal recommendation: "Hospital linens should be laundered, packaged, shipped and stored in a manner that minimizes exposure to environmental contaminants."

The CLEAN Act will prevent this kind of horrific tragedy from occurring in our city. Moreover, it will protect consumers in a myriad of circumstances that are less shocking than the New Orleans deaths, but nevertheless important. One example: industrial laundries handle literally tons of NYC hotel sheets each week, yet, up until now, there has been no requirement that those sheets be laundered in a manner guaranteed to kill bed bugs.

That's why Intro #697A, the "CLEAN Act", is so necessary. It has broad support among City Council members, public health experts, business owners, and others across the city who agree it is time to clean up the industrial laundry sector and protect consumers.

Here's how and why it will work: it's a commonsense bill that would establish clear standards of cleanliness for all local industrial laundries and laundry delivery trucks handling linens used at hotels, hospitals, restaurants, doctor's offices, and other businesses throughout the city.

Intro #697A, the "CLEAN Act", would require industrial laundry facilities and delivery trucks to be licensed by the city's Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA). The CLEAN Act would build on the licensing framework established by the Car Wash Accountability Act and apply the same criteria DCA uses to regulate other commercial laundries like retail laundromats and drycleaners that wash linens and other items for consumers.

Additionally, Intro #697A, the "CLEAN Act", would rely on the same consumer protection criteria used in the enforcement of paid sick leave at businesses throughout the city. Just as sick

workers can endanger consumers by spreading disease and germs, so dirty linens can endanger consumers by spreading disease and germs.

It's essential to create a level playing field for all industrial laundry operators. Irresponsible laundries would be required to meet higher cleanliness standards, and if they fail to clean up their act, they cannot do business in the city. It's as simple as that.

Intro 697A, the "CLEAN Act" will protect New Yorkers regardless of whether the restaurant or city business they go to contracts with an industrial laundry located inside or outside the five boroughs. Industrial laundries located in the five boroughs would be licensed.

Those operating outside the city would have their delivery trucks licensed.

In conclusion, Intro 697A, the "CLEAN Act", is vital for protecting all NYC consumers and ensuring that city businesses like restaurants and hotels have access to clean linens. The legislation will ensure that industrial laundries clean and handle all linens properly.

Bringing much needed city oversight, regulation, and licensing to industrial laundries will benefit millions of New York City consumers and business owners.

We urge you to vote this bill out of committee today and allow the City Council to pass it into law as quickly as possible.

Thank you.

July 14, 2016

Amir Nathan  
Owner of TIMNA  
109 St. Marks Place  
New York, NY 10009

Dear Chairman Espinal and members of the Committee on  
Consumer Affairs:

I am writing to express my support for Int. No. 697-A-  
legislation that would ensure industrial laundries meet proper  
cleanliness standards and help protect New York City consumers  
who regularly come into contact with linens at restaurants,  
hotels, and other establishments.

As a restaurant owner, I am both deeply concerned and outraged  
about the lack of regulation in the industrial laundry facilities  
that supply napkins, table cloths, and aprons to our businesses.

Patrons expect a pleasurable dining experience at New York  
City restaurants. They expect our dining establishments to be  
sanitary; which is why area restaurants are regulated.

Most restaurant owners will tell you that we don't mind  
adhering to standards and regulations if it means we're helping  
to protect the public's health. In fact, it's our responsibility to  
ensure that our customers aren't harmed by our meals.

But the reality is that health and consumer protection standards  
in our restaurants are undermined when we cannot be certain  
that our linens have been properly cleaned.

What's the point of a restaurant grading scale, if our dishes

could be resting on soiled tablecloths? Are these regulations even effective, if our patrons may be using less than clean napkins and exposed to germs and diseases?

This is why I strongly believe the City Laundry Equity and Accountability Now (CLEAN) Act is needed in our city. When irresponsible industrial laundries fail to clean linens properly, it hurts our entire restaurant industry and countless consumers are put at risk.

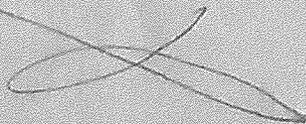
The CLEAN Act would solve this problem. It would protect all consumers at the city's restaurants by ensuring that industrial laundries and their delivery trucks meet strong cleanliness standards for napkins, table cloths, and linens used in restaurants across the five boroughs.

I urge you to vote the legislation out of committee today so that it can be passed by the full City Council as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amir Nathan

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Amir Nathan', written over a horizontal line.

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