

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND
BUILDINGS JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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December 2, 2020
Start: 1:10 p.m.
Recess: 4:16 p.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing - Virtual Room 2

B E F O R E: Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Chairperson, Housing and Buildings

Joseph C. Borelli
Chairperson, Fire and Emergency
Management

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Fernando Cabrera
Margaret S. Chin
Mark Gjonaj
Barry S. Grodenchik
Farah N. Louis
Bill Perkins
Carlina Rivera
Helen K. Rosenthal
Ritchie J. Torres

Joseph C. Borelli
Justin L. Brannan

Fernando Cabrera
Chaim M. Deutsch
Alan N. Maisel

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Melanie La Rocca
Commissioner
Department of Buildings

John Hodgens
Assistant Chief of Operations
FDNY

Julian Bazel
Department Counsel
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Joseph Condon

Barika Williams

Ann Heaney-Korchak

Christopher Athineos

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Kelly Farrell

Laura Rothrock

Mary Ann Rothman

Melissa Barbour

Michael Wolf

Nathan Fishman

Neil Davidowitz

Richard Flateau

Robert Altman

Joanna Wong

Jules Feinman

John McBride

George Bassolino

April McIver

Arthur Goldstein

Eric Dillenberger

Chi Osse

Fior Ortiz

A. Gravery

Avi G.

Nikki Scheuer

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2 WITH FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS POLITE: Recording to PC
4 all set.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS SADOWSKY: Recording to
6 the cloud all set.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS PEREZ: Backup is
8 rolling.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS HOPE: Thank you. Good
10 afternoon and welcome to the Committee on Housing and
11 Buildings jointly with the Committee on Fire and
12 Emergency Management. At this time will all
13 panelists please turn on your videos. I repeat, all
14 panelists please turn on your videos. Thank you. To
15 minimize disruption, please place all electronic
16 devices to vibrate or silent mode. If you wish to
17 submit testimony you may do so at
18 testimony@council.nyc.gov. I repeat,
19 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Chairs, we are ready to
20 begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So I'm gonna go
22 ahead and gavel us in. Chair Borelli, I will, I'll
23 open and obviously then you can, ah, give your
24 opening statement as well [gavel]. Council Member
25 Robert Cornegy, chair of the council's Committee on
Housing and Buildings. I want to thank you all for

3 joining this joint hearing with the Committee on Fire
4 and Emergency Protection, chaired by my friend,
5 Council Member Joe Borelli, titled Oversight - Fire,
6 Gas, and Carbon Monoxide. I'm passionate that our
7 City Council can protect small homeowners and our
8 affordable housing stock and make it safe. We should
9 not have to choose between safety and supporting
10 homeowners and affordable housing. Safety and home
11 ownership are not contradictory. The goal of this
12 hearing is to demonstrate that and to support both.
13 The most important asset for many people is their
14 home. I'm extremely proud of a long record of
15 protecting homeowners and affordable housing
16 simultaneously. Today we'll be discussing a suite of
17 bills intended to make effective and reasonable
18 legislation that improves the safety and quality of
19 life for home and building owners and their tenants.
20 We need to do a better job preventing death by carbon
21 monoxide poisoning. But we must also make
22 accommodations for building owners during the
23 pandemic. Similarly, gas leaks have lead to
24 preventable deaths, and while we want owners to
25 inspect their buildings we want to give extra time
for these inspections due to COVID-19. New Yorkers

3 have died unnecessarily because of gaps in our
4 sprinkler laws. We want to improve the relevant
5 legislation and the purpose of this meeting is to
6 start figuring out how. This hearing allows for
7 testimony from stakeholders, including homeowners,
8 architects, fire safety experts, advocates, etcetera.
9 This is a hearing where bills get heard and
10 amendments are made in order to make the best bill
11 possible that takes into account safety and does not
12 negatively impact small homeowners and our affordable
13 housing stock. It allows all stakeholders to help
14 shape a bill through public testimony. We have a
15 chance to hear about what the current dangers of
16 fires and sprinkler safety and carbon monoxide are.
17 This is where we listen and make the necessary
18 adjustments to both protect tenants and support
19 homeowners. In 2004 the council passed Local Law 7,
20 which required carbon monoxide detectors in dwelling
21 units. This law was expanded by Local Law 191 of
22 2018, which required the installation of carbon
23 monoxide detectors in commercial spaces. Local Law
24 191 was inspired by the damage caused by a carbon
25 monoxide leak in a commercial space just blocks away
from City Hall. Despite these laws the city has

3 suffered a number of carbon monoxide-related deaths
4 and injuries. In 2018 an elderly married couple, the
5 parents of an NYPD sergeant, died due to carbon
6 monoxide exposure. In February of this year seven
7 residents of a Bronx apartment building were sickened
8 with carbon monoxide poisoning. Disturbingly, one
9 resident had a carbon monoxide detector that simply
10 didn't go off. In addition to carbon monoxide-
11 related incidents the city has faced a number of
12 recently deadly and near-deadly gas-related
13 incidents. In 2014 there was a gas explosion in East
14 Harlem that led to the death of eight individuals.
15 In 2015 an explosion at 121 Second Avenue in the East
16 Village killed two people. Following these
17 incidents, the council passed Local Law 152 of 2016,
18 requiring regular inspection of gas piping systems.
19 Even with this legislation the city has still
20 suffered a number of dangerous gas leaks. These
21 include in October 2019 a gas leak in the Flatiron
22 that led to the shutdown of several office buildings
23 in the area. A March 2020 gas leak in Queens schools
24 and an October 2020 gas leak in the Upper East Side,
25 where gas levels reached explosive levels, causing
building evacuations and street closure. Failure to

3 act means that small homeowners risk losing their
4 hard-earned equity. That's why we're working further
5 to expand and enhance outreach requirements by DOB.
6 We'll work tirelessly to ensure that DOB to step up
7 and to help impacted communities understand what
8 these requirements mean. My goal, especially during
9 the coronavirus pandemic, is to support homeowners
10 and our affordable housing stock. I look forward to
11 forthright discussion from all stakeholders today. I
12 take it as a sacred task to protect the equity and
13 safety of homeowners and protect their most important
14 asset. I want to thank my fellow council members for
15 their hard work in proposing these multiple bills,
16 ah, and I look forward to hearing testimony from the
17 public. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Ah, thank you very
19 much. Good morning, I'm Council Member Joe Borelli
20 and I'm the chair of the Committee on Fire and
21 Emergency Management. Of course, we're joined today
22 by Council Member Cornegy and the members of both
23 committees. Today the Committee on Fire and
24 Emergency Management, along with Housing and
25 Buildings, will hear a number of bills that aim to
mitigate fire and explosion hazards and prevent

3 dangerous incidents caused by gas and carbon monoxide
4 [inaudible]. The Fire Department has historically
5 and continues to do an excellent job responding
6 promptly to fire emergencies and saving lives on a
7 daily basis. However, the city must always strive to
8 do more in the hopes of limiting the occurrence of
9 deadly fires and gas explosions and protecting life
10 and property throughout the city. In addition to the
11 bills mentioned by Chairman Cornegy, the committee
12 will also hear two bills sponsored by myself, Intro
13 1341, which would require certain open parking lots
14 to have fire lanes and allow fire apparatus to reach
15 all portions of the lot. In Staten Island just last
16 year we saw firefighters injured responding to an
17 incident at a salvage yard where cars were stacked
18 and limited access was not given. Ah, there is also
19 preconsidered Intro number 6926, which would require
20 all multifamily apartment buildings install carbon
21 monoxide-detecting devices in basements and common
22 areas of such buildings. Um, and finally we also
23 have Intro 273, sponsored by Council Member Donovan
24 Richards, which is in the Fire Committee and would
25 require the department to submit an annual report to
the council on the number of fire and manhole

3 explosions which are responded to. And additionally
4 I want to, ah, get more information on Intro 1146,
5 which is affectionately known as the sprinkler bill.
6 Ah, it's very rare when we have ac people coming in
7 to speak in opposition of this bill, ranging from the
8 real estate injury to community boards and block
9 associations. So I, I'm interested to see, ah, how
10 the city will be able to even cope with the number of
11 applications, how this bill can be done without
12 displacing hundreds of thousands of people, ah, and
13 how we can mitigate the cost on which, in many cases,
14 are very small mom and pop landlords. So with that
15 I'll, I'll turn it back to Council Member Cornegy
16 and, and begin the testimony portion of today's
17 hearing. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Chair
19 Borelli. Um, I want to say that we've been joined by
20 my colleagues, ah, Council Member Louis, Council
21 Member Maisel, Council Member Grodenchik, Council
22 Member Gjonaj, Council Member Rosenthal, Council
23 Member Perkins, Council Member Cabrera, and Council
24 Member Chin. Um, that's who I see on the call. If I
25 missed somebody please bring it to my attention so
that we can announce your presence. Thank you.

2 Turning it back over to Committee Counsel. I will
3 use this air time to reiterate that today's hearing
4 is an opportunity to hear from all stakeholders on
5 the suite of bills that we're hearing. I know that
6 I've heard, um, en masse on 1146-B, um, ah, the
7 concerns that the community has, and I echo the
8 sentiments of Chair Borelli, who has articulated the
9 fact that this is actually the first time I've heard
10 from the public, the real estate, small homeowners,
11 the affordable housing stock, responsible developers,
12 all simultaneously in opposition for the bill, to the
13 bill. Um, today give us an opportunity to put that
14 on record and to hopefully come up with a methodology
15 that will not only protect the safety of, ah, tenants
16 in these buildings, but also protect our affordable
17 housing stock, not displace, ah, tenants, and not,
18 um, irresponsibly, ah, add burden onto small
19 homeowners through, um, unnecessary fines and fees.
20 So that is what we intend to do today. Ah, thank
21 you. Committee Counsel. If Committee Counsel
22 doesn't share in I'll keep rambling, so I'm, I'm
23 begging you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I was, I was muted by
25 accident. Sorry, I'm back. Thank you. Um, I am

2 Jonzel Afad, counsel to the, ah, committees', ah,
3 Council's Committee on Housing and Buildings. Before
4 we begin I want to remind everyone that you will be
5 on mute until you are called to testify, at which
6 point you will be unmuted. During the hearing if
7 council members would like to ask a question, please
8 use the Zoom raise hand function and I will call on
9 you in order. We'll be limiting council member
10 questions to three minutes, including responses. We
11 will first be hearing testimony from the
12 administration, which will be followed by testimony
13 from members of the public. Today the Department of
14 Buildings Commissioner Melanie La Rocca and FDNY
15 Assistant Chief of Operations, John Hodgens, will be
16 testifying. FDNY Counsel Julian Bazel will be
17 available for Q&A. We will now administer the oaths.
18 Ah, Commissioner La Rocca, um, John Hodgens, and
19 Julian Bazel, please raise your right hands. Ah, do
20 you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
21 nothing but the truth before this committee and to
22 respond honestly to council member questions? Ah,
23 Councilman, ah, Commissioner La Rocca, do you affirm?

24 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Thank you, yes.
25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: FDNY Counsel Julian
3 Bazel, do you affirm?

4 COUNSEL BAZEL: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Um, Mr. Hodgens, do
6 you affirm?

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, yes I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may
10 begin when ready, ah, Commissioner La Rocca please
11 begin.

12 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Thank you. Good
13 afternoon Chair Cornegy, Chair Borelli, and members
14 of the committees on Housing and Buildings as well as
15 Fire and Emergency Management. I'm Melanie La Rocca,
16 commissioner of the New York City Department of
17 Buildings. I'm joined by my colleagues from the NYC
18 Fire Department, who will also be providing
19 testimony. I'm pleased to be here today to discuss
20 the bills before the committees. And let me start by
21 thanking the council, as I often do, for your
22 continued commitment to improving safety for all New
23 Yorkers. We share, ah, in this goal together. The
24 construction industry is constantly changing and this
25 department is committed to ensuring that our laws and

3 regulations appropriately address developments in the
4 industry. We look forward to partnering with you to
5 revise the New York City construction codes for the
6 benefit of New Yorkers in the coming months.

7 Together we will ensure that our construction codes
8 are up to date and that they reflect advancements in
9 technology, as well as the latest standards for life
10 safety. Now turning to the bills before the

11 committee today, Intro 842 and Intro 1036 would
12 require new and existing residential buildings 40
13 feet or greater in height to install luminous egress
14 path markings and exit signs. The department
15 supports the intent of these bills as they would
16 improve safety for building occupants by indicating
17 the way out of the building during an emergency.

18 However, the department is concerned about the
19 impact, both practical and financial, that these
20 requirements would have on existing residential
21 buildings, particularly during these unprecedented
22 times. For example, a building owner would need to
23 ensure that existing lighting levels are sufficient
24 to charge luminous egress path markings and that exit
25 signs are appropriately illuminated, which could
require electrical work. The requirement that a

3 registered design professional verify that luminous
4 egress path markings are appropriately installed
5 would also add cost for a building owner undertaking
6 this retrofit. Intro 1146 would require existing
7 residential buildings 40 feet or greater in height to
8 install automatic sprinkler systems. Kike requiring
9 existing residential buildings to install luminous
10 egress path markings and exit signs this requirement
11 would improve safety for building occupants by
12 providing a heightened level of fire protection.

13 While the department supports the intent of this
14 bill, from our experience with Local Law 26 of 2004,
15 which required existing office buildings 100 feet
16 greater, 100 feet or greater in height to install
17 automatic sprinkler systems, we are far too familiar
18 with the challenges a requirement like this, ah,
19 posed for existing buildings. For example, because
20 these residential buildings, ah, because these are
21 residential buildings access to occupied multiple
22 dwelling units for the purposes of installing
23 sprinkler systems will present a significant
24 challenge for building owners and will be disruptive
25 to tenants. Water supply and water pressure in
existing buildings must also be taken into

3 consideration. Inadequate water supply and water
4 pressure could require a dedicated connection to the
5 city's water main and the installation of a fire
6 pump, all of which could add additional time and cost
7 for a building owner undertaking this retrofit.

8 Additionally, from our experience with Local Law 26,
9 10 years may not be sufficient time for a building
10 owner to complete this work in an existing building.

11 This proposal merits further discussion with building
12 owners to fully understand the challenges it may
13 present for them. Intro 356 would require the
14 department to inspect 10% of buildings constructed
15 before 1969 to determine whether such buildings have
16 party wall balconies or fire escapes. The bill would
17 require the department to conduct tens of thousands
18 of inspections to ascertain whether a building has a
19 party wall balcony or a fire escape. The

20 department's existing resources do not account for
21 this substantial workload, which means this
22 requirement would significantly burden our valuable
23 inspectorial resources. As such, we do not support
24 this bill. But we look forward to discussing it
25 further with the committees and sponsor to better
understand the issues the bill seeks to address. It

3 should also be noted that the construction codes
4 require owners to maintain their buildings, including
5 party wall balconies and fire escapes in a safe
6 condition. Further, all buildings greater than six
7 stories must have their exterior walls inspected
8 periodically. These inspections include any
9 pertinences on a building, including party wall
10 balconies and fire escapes. Any deficiencies
11 identified during these inspections must be reported
12 to the department and addressed by building owners.
13 Intro 859 would require that the department conduct
14 certain gas inspections within five days.
15 Specifically, after a hazardous gas condition is
16 addressed an inspection from the department is
17 requested. The department would be required to
18 perform an inspection within five days. Restoring
19 gas to a building is a priority for this department,
20 given the impact a gas outage has on tenants. The
21 department recently released a service level tracker,
22 a new online tool that allows the public to see
23 average wait times for department services, including
24 plumbing inspections. This tool provides increased
25 transparency to the public and allows building owners
to see how long they have to wait for an inspection

3 after that inspection is requested. The department
4 is currently meeting the demand for development
5 inspections at service levels not seen in the
6 department's history, and is already meeting the
7 service level being proposed in this bill with
8 existing resources. However, we're concerned that
9 codifying this service level may result in the need
10 for additional inspectorial resources in the future.
11 And additionally the gas inspections, ah,
12 additionally, pardon me, gas inspections can, ah, be
13 requested through DOB Now inspections, which allows
14 for nearly all types of development inspections to be
15 scheduled online. This is important because it's
16 easier for our customers to schedule inspection
17 appointments. It offers more precise inspection
18 scheduling and improves, ah, inspection tracking and
19 notification. The bill would roll back the progress
20 we've made with DOB Now, which provides our customers
21 with the ability to schedule their inspections when
22 it's most convenient for them. Intro 1459 would
23 prohibit mechanically exhausted air from interfering
24 with natural ventilation sources. The department is
25 supportive of further clarifying that exhaust systems
must not interfere with natural ventilation sources.

2 The New York City mechanical code addresses exhaust
3 systems and provides that air removed by mechanical
4 exhaust systems must be discharged outdoors at a
5 point where it will not cause a nuisance. Further,
6 the mechanical code provides minimum clearances, ah,
7 exhaust outlets must meet, ah, which take into account
8 other building openings, including those used to
9 provide natural ventilation. Even existing buildings
10 altering their mechanical systems must comply with
11 these requirements. Ah, lastly, the department is
12 still reviewing the four bills that were recently
13 added to the agenda for this hearing, but I will
14 briefly discuss two of those, um, which both, ah,
15 dealt with extending upcoming deadlines. Intro 2151
16 and preconsidered Intro extend the deadlines
17 associated with the inspection of gas piping systems
18 in certain community districts and with the
19 installation of carbon monoxide detectors in certain
20 assembly business and mercantile occupancies. The
21 department has no objections to these extensions, but
22 urges building owners to not delay compliance with
23 these requirements. With that, thank you for the
24 opportunity to testify before you. I'll now turn it
25 over to my colleagues at the Fire Department, who

2 will offer testimony on the remainder of the bills on
3 today's agenda.

4 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Good afternoon
5 Chair Borelli, Chair Cornegy, and all the council
6 members present. My name is John Hodgens and I am
7 the assistant chief of fire operations at the New
8 York City Fire Department. Thank you for the
9 opportunity to speak with you today about the 15
10 bills before the committee today. When it comes to
11 fire emergencies the City of New York is currently in
12 the safest period in its history. In the 20th
13 century it was not uncommon to experience hundreds of
14 fire deaths each year. Over the last two decades
15 these numbers have fallen and continue to fall. Over
16 the course of the de Blasio administration the city
17 has experienced fewer than 90 fire deaths each year.
18 In 2019 the total number of fire fatalities was 66,
19 and we are on pace for a lower number in 2020. The
20 number of serious fires has also decreased over the
21 last 20 years. This success which has been achieved
22 here and in cities across the country is not
23 accidental or inevitable. It is the result of hard-
24 working and well-trained firefighters operating in
25 conjunction with strong fire codes and building

3 codes. As a result of thoughtful planning and
4 legislation, buildings are safer and New York City
5 experiences fewer serious fires than ever. When
6 buildings do experience emergencies, both occupants
7 and first responders are safer and better able to
8 manage the situation. The City Council has played a
9 key role in these advances by working with the
10 Department of Buildings and the Fire Department to
11 strengthen and maintain effective codes. We thank
12 you for your previous work in this area and we are
13 pleased to continue discussing additional changes
14 here today on a variety of topics by way of these 15
15 pieces of legislation on fire, gas, and carbon
16 monoxide. Intro 273, this bill would require the
17 Fire Department to submit an annual report to the
18 council regarding the department's responses to
19 manhole fires and explosions. The department tracks
20 these responses and would be able to report them.
21 The Fire Department has no objection to this bill.
22 Intro 1341, this bill would require certain open
23 parking lots to have fire lanes so that a fire truck
24 may reach all portions of the lot. The Fire
25 Department supports this bill. Intro 312, this bill
would require all R2 occupancies to install portable

3 fire extinguishers in a common area on every floor
4 with at least one occupied unit. It may seem
5 counterintuitive, but attempting to extinguish an
6 apartment fire with a portable fire extinguishers
7 from the hallway may do more harm than good. Our
8 basic fire safety message to apartment residents is
9 that they and their family members should leave when
10 there is a fire, close the door behind them, and
11 immediately dial 911 as soon as possible. A fire may
12 grow in the time that it takes for a resident to
13 access a fire extinguishers from a common area and
14 return to the unit to try to fight the fire. Opening
15 the apartment door may also cause a draft, which
16 provides oxygen that can fuel the fire, causing it to
17 grown spread. The resident may be faced with a
18 larger and more dangerous event when they re-enter
19 the apartment with an extinguisher. Also, apartment
20 residents are not trained to fight a fire and doing
21 so can be more complicated than you would think. For
22 example, grease fires in the kitchen are common and
23 best extinguished by smothering. If you a fire
24 extinguisher not designed for a grease fire it may,
25 it may blast the grease fire with, with a burst of
air that can spread the grease and the fire. The

3 safest course for an individual experiencing an
4 apartment fire is to follow proper evacuation
5 procedures and alert the Fire Department by calling
6 911. We are concerned that this legislation may
7 detract from that course and inadvertently put
8 residents in greater danger. Intro 1256, this bill
9 would require residential occupancies with three or
10 more dwellings that are part of a mixed use building
11 to create a fire and emergency preparedness plan. It
12 would also require mercantile occupancies that are
13 part of a mixed use building to create a fire and
14 emergency preparedness plan, or Level 2 plan. The
15 Fire Department supports the concept of this
16 legislation and the concept of preparedness in
17 buildings of all types. However, Level 2 plans are
18 designated for buildings which may experience
19 challenges in addressing fires or non-fire
20 emergencies due to their type, size, or complexity,
21 such as malls and other large mercantile
22 establishments and healthcare facilities. Such plans
23 anticipate that there is a staff on site to implement
24 the plan, including communicating with residents and
25 providing assistance to the Fire Department.
Additionally, the fire code already requires

3 coordination of emergency preparedness plans in a
4 single mixed use building. We do not believe that
5 all mixed use buildings would benefit from developing
6 a Level 2 plan. Mixed use buildings with storefront
7 spaces or other occupancies of limited size or
8 complexity would not have the resources or need to
9 have such a plan. Recently we have greatly enhanced
10 and expanded the emergency preparedness information
11 and materials distributed to apartment buildings to
12 help them address emergency preparedness, and we
13 think this may be a better approach. We are happy to
14 work with the sponsor to discuss how to best promote
15 emergency preparedness in mixed use and other types
16 of buildings. Intro 1746, this bill would require
17 any gas-fired low-pressure boiler that is not fully
18 automatic to be operated by or under the supervision
19 of a person who holds a certificate of fitness issued
20 by the fire commissioner. After conferring with
21 colleagues at the Department of Buildings and in the
22 sponsor's office, we have been unable to identify any
23 widespread use of non-automated low-pressure gas
24 boilers. If these units do exist, it is unclear why
25 they would necessitate monitoring by an individual
with a certificate of fitness. We would like to know

2 more about the motivation for this legislation before
3 taking a position. We thank the council and the
4 committees for the opportunity today to discuss this
5 legislation. We would be happy to take your
6 questions at this time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I will
8 now turn it over to questions from Chair Cornegy and
9 Chair Borelli. As a reminder, the council members
10 other than Chair [inaudible] would like to ask a
11 question of the administration please use the Zoom
12 hand function and I will call on you [inaudible].
13 Chair Cornegy, please begin.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Chair Cornegy, you're on
15 mute.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. Before
17 I begin my testimony, I want to say thank you to, um,
18 Commissioner La Rocca for, for being here. Ah, thank
19 you for, um, Assistant Chief John Hodgens for, for
20 showing, um, and for testifying. Um, and, and, I
21 want to let just the general public know that today
22 is a hearing. There is no vote or action to be taken
23 today. Ah, so I know that many people have reached
24 out to my office, ah, for a no vote on several bills.
25 There is no vote today. We are hearing these bills

3 in an effort to make sure that we could get the most,
4 the best and most productive and efficient
5 [inaudible] and your input is, is greatly
6 appreciated, ah, in this process. Um, so with that
7 being said, um, I, I believe that we were going to
8 hear from or get statements from the bills', ah,
9 sponsors, Committee Counsel?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, ah...

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: [inaudible].

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That's gonna happen
13 during the question and answer.

14 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK. So I'll begin,
15 ah, my questions in, in a general fashion, um, and I
16 guess it's to, um, Commissioner La Rocca. Ah, does
17 DOB keep track of fire, gas, and carbon monoxide
18 incidences that occur in the city?

19 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: So, ah, thank
20 you, Chair. The department, um, ah, does not keep
21 track of those incidences. Um, however, we do play
22 an important role in that, um, our colleagues at
23 Fire, who are our first responders, will on a number
24 of occasions request the services of the department
25 for incidences that fall within, um, one of those
three that you mentioned. So we do certainly respond

2 to incidences where department resources are needed.
3 Typically that does look, um, at, ah, structural
4 concerns related to fire.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So, so I guess the,
6 the same question I would pose to FDNY. Does FDNY
7 keep track of fire, gas, and carbon monoxide
8 incidences that occur in the city?

9 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Well, yes. If
10 we receive a 911 call or an alarm through a
11 different, um, you know, transmission, not that, um,
12 we, um, go to the scene to mitigate the emergency.
13 All of these actions and its response is, is tracked
14 in our, in our CAD system, which is our computer
15 assist dispatch system. So, yes, I mean, we do have
16 records of these incidents, um, in, in, ah, in our
17 CAD system.

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So, so who and
19 where can, ah, this warehouse of information be
20 accessed? Can it be accessed from the general
21 public? Can it be accessed from the council? Or is
22 it just an internal, um, ah, kind of mechanism that
23 you, that you [inaudible]?

24 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: For the most
25 part it's an internal mechanism. It is available on

3 open source data. Um, it may not be broken down into
4 individual addresses, but the, um, the information is
5 available as to how many incidents the department has
6 responded to.

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, and, and, I
8 think it's important for us to know that as we're
9 crafting bills that we think anecdotally we're
10 getting information on, on some of the incidences.
11 It would be great to be able to have, ah, as a
12 resource, um, ah, that system, ah, access to us. And
13 you said about open source we can get it. But I
14 certainly as the chair of the committee would like to
15 have a, ah, a more effective and efficient way to
16 share that information with the council, at least
17 with this committee. Yes, um, you know, we, we, um,
18 we would be open to further discussion on, on
19 providing that type of information.

20 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yeah. I, I wasn't
21 try to nail you to the wall on that one...

22 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: No.

23 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: ...ah, Assistant
24 Chief. So, yes, I'd like to offline talk about how
25 we can do that and have a better line of
communication on these incidences that take place so

2 we could better craft legislation jointly, ah, around
3 safety. So, ah, I look forward to that. Um, so
4 what's the process for reporting, I'm sorry, ah, is
5 DOB the proper entity to receive and respond to
6 reports of these incidents? I know that you, you
7 know, you get your colleagues from FDNY and some
8 other places, um, to report this information. Is
9 that the best system for DOB? Um, and if not what
10 would be a better, ah, system for DOB to have that
11 information?

12 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Yeah, I mean, I
13 would say, obviously for anybody who has a
14 circumstance, ah, for one of those three that you
15 mentioned, Chair, obviously 911 is the right
16 response, immediate response for any individual. Um,
17 and yes, I think the process we have with the Fire
18 Department is exceptional. We have a great
19 partnership between our two agencies, um, and work
20 very closely together to ensure, ah, that our
21 buildings are safe for occupants. So, yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So gas leakages
23 that are reported are generally done directly from
24 the [inaudible], ah, you get that information from
25 the 311 system? Is it self-reporting? Can someone

3 else report? What's the mechanism for reporting, ah,
4 gas leakages or fire code violations?

5 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: So I'll start and
6 Fire, you can chime in on, on the second part there.
7 But obviously the bulk of the work from the
8 Department of Buildings is through the 311 system and
9 we think that system is very, ah, works very well for
10 us. It provides the, ah, community with a level of
11 transparency since those complaints do live our, ah,
12 website at the associated address, um, where a
13 complaint comes in. So, so we think the transparency
14 that that system has right now for us is a very
15 beneficial one. Fire, if you want to add more?

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, John.

17 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: For a gas leak
18 that's considered, ah, you know, an immediate, ah,
19 emergency and we would, ah, the best method of, you
20 know, notifying us would be through 911. And we
21 would have an immediate response to any type of gas
22 leak. As far as fire code violations, um, that could
23 be reported through the 311 system, and we all
24 address through our complaints, ah, the complaint
25 process.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Do, do either one
3 of the agencies know how many, um, ah, gas leak
4 reports from 311 came in in 2019? Or any subsequent
5 years?

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Um, so, you're
7 asking about 311. I, I'm unaware of, of, ah, how
8 many [inaudible]. We can, we can look into and, ah,
9 get back to you with that.

10 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Again, I just think
11 that that's pertinent information to be able to, ah,
12 really drill down on legislation that, um, gets to
13 the safety issues that we want to address today, but
14 also doesn't target, um, small homeowners or
15 affordable housing stock or those kind of things that
16 I, I think the, the more we drill down and the more
17 central we can get to those reports, um, we'll have a
18 better picture on where we should be focusing, ah,
19 the legislation. So thank you, and, again, offline,
20 um, I'd, I'd like to have a conversation with you
21 about, ah, those annual reports, um, especially for
22 2019.

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: From the Fire
24 Department perspective we continually message that
25 for any type of gas leak or odor of gas to call 911.

3 Um, it's an emergency and it requires a response, ah,
4 an immediate response in my units. Um, so, you know,
5 the, the best method of, um, ah, reporting a gas leak
6 is definitely through the 911 system.

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK. Um, and then
8 lastly before I, I go to my, my colleague and
9 cochair, Joe Borelli, um, what measures, ah, ah,
10 Commissioner La Rocca, what measures does DOB have in
11 place to ensure proper certification of fire, gas,
12 and carbon monoxide incident prevention within the
13 buildings inspected?

14 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Certainly. So
15 with respect to, ah, carbon monoxide and gas, ah, and
16 fire, ah, the department does not perform proactive
17 inspections around, um, ah, these devices and the
18 functionality of them. Ah, we certainly do
19 [inaudible] plans, ah, to ascertain whether carbon
20 monoxide, ah, devices are appropriately installed in
21 a building, ah, that is being constructed or where
22 you have major alterations, ah, to a building or a
23 space. Um, and I will note that the construction
24 code, ah, does, ah, establish a, a maintenance
25 requirement for, um, particularly carbon monoxide
detectors, ah, devices, and requires that they are

2 periodically replaced. Um, that is on top of, ah,
3 the housing maintenance code, ah, that requires for
4 residential buildings owners to do, ah, effectively
5 the same.

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, so the
7 remainder of my questions I will come back on a
8 second round. I throw or pass the baton to my, ah,
9 cochair, ah, Council Member Borelli.

10 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you, thank
11 you very much, ah, for handing it over to me for a
12 brief second. Um, I have questions about Intro 1146,
13 but I just want to, ah, I want to ask, ah, the
14 assistant chief if he, ah, I mean, frankly, if he
15 misses seeing me in the gym. That's, that's what I
16 really want to, ah, I want to know about. I don't
17 think he's listening.

18 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: [laughs].

19 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: [laughs]

20 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: [inaudible] gym.

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Yeah, yeah, yeah
22 [laughs].

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Yeah, now I'm
24 [inaudible] we're, we're closed down [inaudible].

25 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Unfortunately.

2 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Yeah, I know.

3 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Ah, Commissioner La
4 Rocca, I just, you mentioned Intro 26 of 2004 and
5 you, you referenced some of the problems, ah, that
6 have arisen from that. So do you know what was the
7 timeline written into the bill? I tried to look it
8 up, to be honest, while we were doing this. I just
9 didn't have time. Ah, but do you remember when the
10 timeline was for that bill?

11 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Fifteen years.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So we have just
13 crossed that threshold. Are, are we in 100%
14 compliance?

15 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Ah, we are, ah,
16 not at 100% compliance, and certainly while we've
17 seen the number of buildings, um, move forward, um,
18 and, ah, come into compliance with, ah, Local Law 26,
19 as of, ah, this moment we're at about 52%.

20 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So half, ah, half,
21 roughly, are done within the timeframe prescribed by
22 law. Can you just go through some of the challenges
23 that, um, have resulted in that noncompliance?

24 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: You know, I think
25 we've heard certainly from owners who have expressed,

2 ah, a concern around, um, ah, the lack of vacancy,
3 ah, in the units with, ah, that being a, ah,
4 limitation on their ability to get in and, ah,
5 sprinkler those spaces and, again, um, Local Law 26
6 of 2004 was specific to commercial buildings. Um,
7 and so that is, you know, certainly a challenge. Um,
8 um, it does require a significant investment of
9 resources as well as, um, you know, the need to look
10 at your building system to ensure that you have the
11 capacity to increase, um, ah, ah, service on the
12 [inaudible].

13 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And can, can you
14 just explain how long, ah, the Department of
15 Buildings procedure is or how long it takes from
16 when, ah, an architect or engineer files for a
17 sprinkler permit to when it's finally signed off on?

18 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Um, respectfully,
19 Council Member, a lot of that is dependent on the
20 applicant and their ability to, ah, submit to the
21 department code-compliant documentation. So I will
22 say this. Our, ah, I'm sorry, I got a little
23 feedback there. So our turnaround time for first
24 reviews of, ah, applications, ah, is probably at our,
25 our best levels that we've seen, um, in modern

2 history for the department. So you're looking at an
3 applicant that is received from the department and
4 you're under 10 days, um, for that first review. So
5 our, I feel very confident in our ability to review
6 documentation, um, and I certainly feel equally as
7 strong when it comes to the, ah, end of that process
8 or, ah, inspection sign-off, again an area where
9 we've seen tremendous...

10 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Yeah, my, my
11 question wasn't meant to be a criticism of the length
12 of time, but rather, um, how many people does it take
13 in your department to provide that turnaround time?

14 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: I mean, that's,
15 ah, you know, it is a team effort to do that, right?
16 You have, ah, applications that are submitted that
17 take the, I apologize, my lights turned off, that
18 take the work of the borough office that those are
19 submitted to. So, um, hard to quantify an exact
20 number. I'd be happy to come back to you, um, with
21 a...

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Do you how many...

23 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: ...more refined
24 answer.

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Do we know how many
3 buildings there are that are covered by Intro 26, or
4 how many hundred-story buildings there are?

5 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Ah, of Intro 26
6 of 2005 the number is 1321.

7 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Is there, so,
8 right, that's, that's, I mean, to me that sounds like
9 a workable number in 15 years. Do we even have an
10 estimate on how many buildings are over 40 feet tall
11 in the City of New York?

12 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Ah, I am looking.
13 I thought I had a estimate but, ah, about 85,000.

14 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, you know,
15 we're, we're talking a significantly more, a
16 significantly larger number of buildings that would
17 have to go through almost an identical process to
18 buildings that are over 100 stories, albeit the, the
19 plans might not be as complex or as elaborate or
20 large, but the process is, is roughly the same.

21 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Correct.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And it would take
23 perhaps 85 times as many people for your agency to
24 provide the same turnaround time in terms of man
25 hours as it would to provide the level of service

3 you're providing now to the one thousand and change
4 buildings that we're dealing with.

5 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: I could certainly
6 see a universe where additional, ah, work for this
7 population of approximately 85,000 buildings would
8 have an impact in our staff.

9 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Frankly speaking, I
10 mean, this would be something that would be
11 tremendously burdensome on the agency with current
12 manpower limits.

13 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: We are currently
14 not staffed to accommodate this.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Um, can, can you go
16 through some of the, um, and this might be
17 secondhand, and if it is secondhand I think we have
18 other people coming up, but in your experience what
19 has been some of the hardships faced by tenants of
20 Intro 26?

21 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: You know, I would
22 defer to owners who could speak more accurately about
23 the interactions they're having with their tenants.
24 But I will say, broadly speaking, we do know that,
25 um, the installation of sprinklers can be, um, um,
ah, invasive work. It does require the removal of

3 certain portions of a wall. Um, ah, so that is
4 certainly a, ah, true statement that, you know,
5 sprinkler work is, um, very much so ah, ah, you know,
6 a real, um, amount of labor. That being said, again,
7 as I mentioned in my testimony, um, you know, we are
8 certainly as a department, ah, very interested in
9 any, ah, opportunity to discuss improvements, um, to
10 safety and certainly, ah, ah, do believe that
11 sprinklers are an element, um, to help, ah, ah, move
12 that forward.

13 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: In your experience
14 is, is the work typically done by, um, using an
15 existing water main to charge the lines or is a
16 separate water main needed that could be, ah, could
17 ascend through common areas?

18 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Um, it would be
19 an, ah, individual building assessment.

20 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: But in, in a
21 building that might be 41 stories, ah, 41 feet high,
22 um, we're not talking the type of building that might
23 have some, some central chamber with which they can
24 put these lines that go vertical easily in, correct?

25 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Again, I would
defer to the individual nature of the building and

3 how it's designed. But I could certainly, ah, see a
4 scenario where there would be, ah, a need to have,
5 ah, ah, some work done in order to accommodate, um,
6 the system.

7 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: OK. I, I will
8 leave it at that. Um, I mean, to be honest I think
9 all the other bills we're hearing today, ah, um, we
10 can spend some time talking about them, but I don't
11 think any of them really come to the same threshold
12 as Intro 1146, because with 1146 we are potentially
13 looking at displacing hundreds of thousands of
14 residents, ah, with an extremely costly process, ah,
15 with a potential, ah, bureaucratic nightmare because
16 we don't have the staffing to handle 85%, or 85 times
17 more applications than this. But I will turn it back
18 to, ah, Chairman Cornegy and, um, we will move on
19 from here. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you so
21 much for that line of questioning, ah, Chair Borelli.
22 Um, I want to, ah, let us know that we've been joined
23 by, ah, Council Member Brannan, Council Member
24 Powers, Council Member Rodriguez, and Council Member
25 Deutsch. Um, I think it's we are at that point where
we'll hear from colleagues, um, who will ask

2 questions, first from the sponsors of bills and they
3 will have five minutes on the clock, ah, to talk
4 about their bill and to ask any question that they
5 may seem, may feel that's relevant, ah, to this
6 hearing. So, Committee Counsel, we have five minutes
7 on the clock for bill sponsors at this point.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, ah, thank
9 you, Chair. Um, I will now call on council members
10 to ask questions. First I will go by sponsors of
11 bills that are being heard today. So if you are a
12 sponsor of a bill please raise your hand. Um, for,
13 ah, openings, ah, for, ah, sorry, for sponsors who
14 are making statements we are limiting it to five
15 minutes. Otherwise, questions will be three minutes.
16 Um, um, there will be three minutes allotted for the
17 second round of questioning. Um, first we are gonna
18 go to Council Member Grodenchik.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Ah, thank
21 you. Ah, thank you, Chairs, um, my chair and, ah,
22 Cornegy and Chair Borelli. I thank you for holding
23 this hearing. I would like to read a brief statement
24 and then I probably will have a question, ah, for the
25 Fire Department. Um, I'm pleased today to have three

3 bills that are being heard during this hearing and
4 they all relate to fire safety. Ah, we have heard
5 about Intro 842, which would require owners of all
6 new and existing buildings 40 feet or higher to
7 install luminous egress path markings to delineate an
8 exit path, making getting of a smoking, um, fire much
9 easier. Intro 1036 would require, ah, as well, ah,
10 installing directional signs in buildings 40 feet or
11 higher, and, um, what seems to be the main topic of
12 concern today, ah, Intro 1146-B would require owners
13 of residential buildings over 40 feet tall to install
14 automatic sprinklers, ah, by the end of this decade.
15 The original plan on this bill was drafted a couple
16 of years ago, I want to, ah, add to that, ah, it for
17 upgrades to take place over a 10-year period. I, I
18 understand and I've heard the concerns, and I foresee
19 amendments to this bill, um, that would track that
20 10-year plan. Ah, building owners would, ah, need to
21 file an interim report describing a plan for
22 compliance over a several-year period of time, and
23 this bill, as has been mentioned, was modeled after
24 local, ah, 2004, local law that required commercial
25 buildings, ah, to retrofit with sprinkles. Ah, I am
not oblivious to the need, ah, for financing here

3 and, um, a year ago we have asked for legislation to
4 be drafted that would accompany this bill, um, that
5 would give either, um, tax credits or, um, ah, very,
6 very reasonable loans, and, again, that was before
7 the pandemic hit. Ah, these bills were drafted, ah,
8 in the wake of, ah, several very severe fires that
9 occurred in New York City, um, which were quite
10 deadly, um, and among the deadliest fires that had
11 occurred over the past quarter century. Ah, having
12 said all that, I have heard from, um, many people, my
13 colleagues included. I have met, ah, via Zoom
14 meetings, ah, with associations. I've heard from
15 individual owners and co-ops in my district, and I
16 know that my colleagues have as well. And, um, the
17 bills, of course, were drafted with the idea that,
18 ah, we promote as best as possible, um, public
19 safety. And I guess my, my question would be for the
20 FDNY, although it's always good to see Commissioner
21 La Rocca, um, the FDNY, ah, outside of, um,
22 sprinklers, Chief, um, 'cause I'm not on Chair
23 Borelli's committee, um, but I am on this committee,
24 ah, Housing and Buildings, ah, outside of sprinklers
25 what's the single most important thing? I know we
have laws, um, for, ah, smoke detectors, carbon

3 monoxide detectors, and I, I would be interested in
4 hearing your opinion, um, on how important it would
5 be to retrofit buildings and what other steps we
6 could take as we go forward. And I know we're gonna
7 hear from a lot of people today and I look forward to
8 hearing from people about our bills today as well.
9 So, Chief, if you could?

10 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Yes. Um, so,
11 ah, automatic sprinkler systems are always ah
12 positive things, ah, thing to have, ah, to mitigate,
13 you know, fires. They, they, they give you early
14 detection and, um, immediately, you know, apply water
15 to the fire. I mean, [inaudible] Fire Department's
16 perspective, ah, sprinkler systems are a good thing.
17 Ah, we do, ah, we are aware there are challenges for
18 other agencies than the home owner with this, um,
19 with this, you know, bill. Um, but the Fire
20 Department is always in favor of sprinkler systems.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I appreciate
22 that. Um, I don't have, I think, ah, Commissioner La
23 Rocca has made herself quite clear, as always, ah,
24 and Chair Cornegy, Chair Borelli, I'm gonna, ah, give
25 back the balance of my time for now, um, and I look
forward to hearing, ah, from the many people who are

3 going to be testifying today about all the
4 legislation. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
6 Member. Ah, next we are going to be hearing from
7 Council Member Rosenthal, followed by Council Member
8 Dromm. As a reminder, council members who are making
9 an opening please raise your hand. Um, otherwise we
10 will move on to straight questioning. Um, Council
11 Member Rosenthal, please go ahead.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Ah, thank you
14 very much. I'm not making an opening statement. I'm
15 just going to question. Is that all right?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That's fine.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.
18 Um, my questions are actually geared toward, um, the
19 deputy commissioner from the Fire Department, um, and
20 have to do with, ah, the experience we've had, um,
21 with small fires in our district. Um, I'm wondering,
22 we've had situations where ah, um, the fire people
23 had gone into a smaller building and there are walls
24 that are illegally put up, um, so that the, ah,
25 firefighters don't really know what's in there. And
I just wanted to know about your experience with

2 that? I'm gonna actually give you all three
3 questions to answer 'cause I think they're all
4 related. Um, there are also a lot of times when the
5 DOB safety plan for a building does not match the
6 FDNY safety plan and I'm wondering what work you do
7 around that. Um, and then lastly, ah, my bill
8 related to the party wall balconies, um, a complete
9 actually is, is probably more for, ah, Commissioner
10 La Rocca, but, um, Deputy Commissioner if you have
11 any thoughts about that one, um, we'd appreciate it.
12 The genesis of that bill is a situation when a
13 building owner, ah, had to repair their stairwell and
14 so asked, sent a note around to all the residents
15 saying that if they wanted to go in and out of the
16 building they had to use the fire escape, um, which
17 then drew our attention to the party balconies, which
18 were also quite shabby. Um, anyway, so, so those are
19 my questions, ah, Chief. Thank you.

20 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: OK, so just to
21 reiterate to be sure your first question is, ah, in
22 regards to, ah, illegal alterations done within a
23 building?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

2 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: OK, so when we
3 come across this we, um, we, our process is to, is to
4 notify the Department of Buildings. Um, we also take
5 into consideration the impact of the alteration and
6 if it poses a risk for the occupants, um, such as
7 egress or, or usually it would be an egress issue.
8 And if that's the case we, um, we have a process, ah,
9 internal, which is to actually vacate the...

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

11 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: ...the area.
12 But, um, you know, but these are what we call
13 referrals, because it is Department of Buildings, ah,
14 you know, function to, to look into the illegal
15 alterations and, ah, and, and, you know, matters like
16 that. But we do take immediate action if there is a
17 life, life hazard, a safety hazard.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Um, can I just
19 real quickly, Chairs, may I have a little bit more
20 time so the, ah, ah, FDNY can answer these questions?

21 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, Rosenthal, this
22 is a recurring theme with you. I feel like, ah, I'm
23 the, I'm the principal, in the principal's office.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [laughs]
25

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I guess. I hope
3 we're not setting a, a terrible precedent here.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: All right. I,
5 I will actually keep it very short. Um, just
6 wondering even to the point you just made, um, Chief,
7 if, ah, you have a, if you have a sense of how many
8 times that happens over the course of a year?

9 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Um,
10 unfortunately I do not have that, you know, at my,
11 ah, you know, right now.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: OK. You can
13 move on. That's fine.

14 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: You know, we'll
15 be willing to work with you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And then
17 similarly with the difference between the safety
18 plans between DOB and FDNY?

19 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: So on that I'm
20 not exactly sure. I would need an, um, I might need
21 an example, um, as to where that occurs. I'm not,
22 not aware.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I guess in
24 some ways it's similar to the first question. It's
25 when you would show up at a site, you have the

2 building on your, on your board based on, you know,
3 your building plans that you have on record and then
4 should there be illegal walls, um, you run into that
5 problem.

6 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Yes, and, and
7 that the process would be as I described.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: OK.

9 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: [inaudible].

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: OK. Thank you
11 all very much. Thank you, Chair.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
13 Member. Next we're gonna be hearing by Council
14 Member Dromm, followed by Council Member Rodriguez.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very
17 much, Chair Cornegy and Chair Borelli. I'm gonna
18 make a statement first and then, ah, another
19 statement. We need more time. That's the plea I
20 hear from Buildings, particularly co-ops in my
21 district when confronted with the city's gas line
22 inspection deadline in the middle of the COVID-19
23 crisis. In 2016, faced with the recent memory of two
24 explosive tragedies and aging gas infrastructure
25 citywide this council passed legislation that was

3 then enacted as Local Law 152. Our goal, whenever we
4 pass legislation aimed at promoting building safety
5 is to get individuals and entities to comply. Gas
6 lines are such important issue that we have to do
7 everything we can to facilitate compliance. But
8 Local Law 152 co-ops and other residential buildings
9 in my district and throughout the city are left
10 scrambling at a time when we are all dealing with an
11 epidemic, pandemic-induced challenge. Gas line
12 inspections and especially remediation can entail a
13 whole host of concerns, from a hefty but critical
14 financial investment to the displacement of
15 residents. For this initial round of inspections
16 extending the deadline to six months is quite
17 reasonable. Intro 2151-A also includes measures to
18 solicit public comment and implement education and
19 outreach. I appreciate Chair Cornegy and his work,
20 ah, his work, for his work with me to ensure that
21 these items were included in the current legislation.
22 And I just want to say it is good to see our
23 commissioner, ah, Commissioner La Rocca, who I have
24 not seen in this role. I am more familiar with you
25 in your previous role with the School Construction
Authority and I appreciate your support of the

2 legislation, um, and, um, and just want to remind you
3 that the deadline for Community Districts 1, 3, and
4 10 are coming up at the end of December, so it's my
5 hope that we can work together quickly to pass this
6 legislation before that deadline, um, occurs. And,
7 again, thank you, Chair Cornegy, for your input into
8 the legislation and Chair Borelli for giving me time
9 to speak today as well. Thank you very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, Chair Dromm, I
11 want to let you know that whatever is necessary for
12 us to get this passed before the deadline, ah, you
13 can count on me and this committee to work with you
14 to get it done.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very
16 much, thank you, Chair Cornegy. Next up we'll be
17 hearing from Council Member Rodriguez, followed by
18 Council Member Chin.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
21 Chairs. Today I would like to talk about Intro 312,
22 eh, which I'm a prime sponsor alongside Council
23 Member Brannan, which would amend the New York City
24 Fire Code in relationship to requiring portable fire,
25 fire extinguish, extinguisher, in all multiple

3 dwellings. We know that everyone is going through a
4 tough financial situation, but we need to invest to
5 save lives. Recently we lost two life in my district
6 in the Bridges building in a fire. I believe that
7 the city should work with the private sector to help
8 install these fire extinguisher. It's necessary.

9 But our priority has to be the safety of New Yorkers,
10 especially during these oncoming colder month. In

11 the month of November along with [inaudible] multiple
12 fires occurred in residential buildings in northern
13 Manhattan and Murray Hill. Some of these buildings

14 did not portable fire extinguisher ready and quickly

15 available for residents to use. [inaudible] one of

16 those were two individual lost their life. The last

17 fire happened two days ago, three days ago in Murray

18 Hill. We don't know what will have happened if this

19 bill will happen in place which will require portable

20 fire extinguisher to be installed in a common area on

21 every floor with at least one dwelling unit. I would

22 like to first of all, I mean, I would like to end

23 thanking the men and women the Fire Department for

24 the great job that they do every day [inaudible] a

25 race to save others and I would like to hear from the

Fire Department and what is your stand on this bill?

3 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: OK, um, well,
4 first of all, sorry, sorry about the residents of
5 your community. We, we did respond to that fire and
6 we're aware of it, you know, the last, in the last
7 few days. But as far as portable fire extinguishers
8 in a common area of a multiple dwelling, we feel,
9 we, we don't support that. It seems
10 counterintuitive, but the fact is that to operate a
11 fire extinguisher requires, although it's not
12 complicated, a little bit of training. There's many,
13 um, components, um, that have to be taken into
14 consideration if somebody was to use a portable fire
15 extinguisher. I mean, one of the, um, one of our
16 most important messages to residents is when there's
17 a fire to, to leave the apartment or the dwelling,
18 close the door, and, and dial 911. We feel that is
19 the best course of action. If, if there was a fire
20 extinguisher our fear is that a person would open the
21 door to their apartment, go into the hallway, I don't
22 know how many feet away the fire extinguisher is.
23 Once they open the door there, there is inrush of air
24 that feeds the fire. So all the time that's going on
25 the fire could be growing exponentially. And, and
the person who, ah, takes the fire extinguisher may

3 not be familiar with its use and, and, and when its
4 use would even be detrimental in the hands of a, a
5 firefighter, because a fire extinguisher is designed
6 for a small fire. Now if this fire started to expand
7 and you attempt to use a fire extinguisher it's, it's
8 actually a dangerous operation. Um, there are also
9 different types of fire extinguishers and that are
10 designed to be used for different materials that are
11 on fire. Ah, regular combustibles require water.
12 Um, flammable liquids require a dry chemical or foam,
13 and electrical fires even require a, a specific type
14 of fire extinguisher. Um, so I think that that's the
15 reason why we don't think that this is, um, we don't
16 really, we don't support this, this, this bill.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: OK. I just
17 hope that we can continue having conversation in that
18 even though we look as a pilot project, eh, to see
19 how we working in particular area in that unless we
20 and, and, and I do respect your knowledge and, and,
21 and as a department that we rely on to keep us safe
22 when it comes to fire, but I feel that, I understand
23 your knowledge about this, but I also feel that we
24 have not had it yet so we don't know what the result
25 is and, and, I do believe that if, we have to look at

3 a pilot project to see how they work and here in my
4 district it's...

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...[inaudible]

7 we lost, you know, one of my neighbors a few years
8 ago who used to run the largest [inaudible] here in
9 Manhattan and I think that if there would be a fire
10 extinguisher there his life could be saved and of
11 course this is assumption based on what I could know.

12 We will rely on you for your knowledge, but I think
13 that we, if we can look at the possibility, even if
14 we could do a pilot project I, I hope that we can
15 have conversation about.

16 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Oh, yes, we are
17 always open to, you know, further discussion for, you
18 know, to make, ah, fire safety, ah, um, improve fire
19 safety in any situation. Um, one thing very
20 important also to emphasize is that, ah, that
21 members, ah, that people have working smoke
22 detectors, um, and how important it is to change the
23 batteries two times a year, usually when you change
24 your clocks back, ah, the two times during the year
25 it's a good time to change the battery in your smoke
detector, and that will save lives because when the

2 smoke detector also notifies you in the very early
3 stages of a fire that you still have a chance to get
4 out safely, and always close the door.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: OK, thank you.
6 Thanks, Chairs, thanks.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: OK, next we're going
8 to be hearing from Council Member Chin, who will be
9 asking a question, followed by Council Member
10 Rosenthal, who will be asking a second round of
11 questions. Thank you.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Um, thank you. Ah,
14 thank you to all the chairs. Um, I wanted to talk
15 about 1146-A, and I just heard from the fire chief
16 and I agree with you that we need to do more on
17 education on fire safety. In my district I have a
18 lot of, you know, old tenement building and we had
19 some tragic fires, um, since I've been, you know, in
20 the City Council and that is a concern that I have,
21 and that's why I signed on to as a cosponsor for the
22 sprinkler bill, because that's, I automatically think
23 that the sprinkler system would be the best because
24 if there's a fire, you know, water comes down and
25 would put out the fire. And I was, um, I also want

3 to thank a lot of my, ah, constituent who are small
4 property owner who have reached out, ah, in the last
5 couple of days about their concern, ah, of the cost
6 factor, the invasiveness, and also issues that we
7 haven't thought about. I chair the Committee on
8 Aging and a lot of the residents are seniors and I
9 just can't imagine, ah, seeing them having to be
10 relocated in order for the sprinkler system, ah, to
11 be installed, and I think the Commissioner La Rocca
12 talked about that. And so I think that what can we
13 do, ah, with property owners and owners to really
14 improve, ah, you know, fire safety, ah, education.
15 Let's see if there's a way that we can work together,
16 'cause some seniors don't know how to change the
17 battery, ah, of their alarm so, I mean, if we can
18 work together with the owner to really do that for
19 the resident, ah, that might be helpful. I think
20 fire safety is a big concern. Ah, so, you know,
21 we're really ready to work with, with everyone, ah,
22 on that and, ah, I guess the deputy, ah, the
23 assistant chief, I mean, how can the Fire Department
24 really work with us to work with landlords to do more
25 of the regular inspections and, and safety education,
ah, so that we can prevent tragedy from happening.

2 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: Ah, well, the
3 Fire Department is, ah, a big component of fire
4 safety and you did touch upon the working smoke
5 detectors, and that would be the number one, um, you
6 know, failsafe or, you know, fire safety measure that
7 could be taken by, by a building owners to make sure
8 that all the apartments have working smoke detectors,
9 and also the individual, um, apartment, ah, owner or
10 renter. Ah, so that is key, that is one of the main
11 components of that, and also...

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: ... always
14 maintaining a means of egress, making sure that you
15 have access to, you know, the fire escape or whatever
16 it may be. So that in conjunction with the smoke
17 detectors is a great fire safety lesson that the Fire
18 Department is, is always, you know, reinforcing.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I think because of
20 all the, a lot of unanswered questions, ah, to 1146-B
21 and all the concern that's being raised right now
22 that, that I have been heard about, and there are
23 really important issue. Um, I am gonna get off the
24 bill. Ah, I'm withdrawing my support right now for
25 1146, um, but I still want to make sure that we work

3 with, ah, you know, property owner, small building
4 owner, ah, to ensure, ah, fire safety and if there's
5 ways that we can develop program to do that I look
6 forward to working with the Fire Department and the
7 small property owner. Thank you.

8 ASSISTANT CHIEF HODGENS: OK, I do have
9 also from the Fire Department is Julian Bazel, our
10 FDNY counsel. If we have a minute I would pass it on
11 to him if he has anything to say about this question.

12 DEPARTMENT COUNSEL BAZEL: Yeah, I...

13 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Absolutely.

14 DEPARTMENT COUNSEL BAZEL: Yes, thank
15 you. Um, ah, Council Member, I do want to emphasize
16 that in recent years the Fire Department has, um,
17 really, ah, enhanced and expanded the public
18 information about emergency preparedness and fire
19 safety in apartment buildings. Ah, we put out an
20 expanded emergency preparedness guide and, um,
21 pursuant to, ah, a recent local law we have an
22 evacuation checklist. And, and HPD has also joined
23 us on the landlord side in terms of encouraging
24 building owners to talk to, ah, apartment residents
25 about emergency preparedness. This isn't just about
fire safety, it's also about weather emergencies and

3 all kinds of other conditions that might affect the
4 building, loss of power, um, things of that sort. So
5 we have been trying to, ah, encourage building owners
6 to talk to apartment residents and have a discussion
7 about what can be done by the building owner and what
8 can't be done by the building owner, what residents
9 themselves should be preparing for in the event of
10 various kinds of fire safety or other emergencies.
11 Ah, from a fire safety perspective, as the chief
12 explained, you know, the key is usually the, ah, the
13 smoke detector. In the absence of a sprinkler system
14 the, the smoke detector is the key thing that they
15 need to maintain and we, the Fire Department also has
16 a fire safety education unit that does a lot of
17 outreach activity with seniors and other community
18 groups about, um, helping them, ah, either get or
19 install um, um, fire safety detectors, ah, sorry, ah,
20 ah, fire alarms and/or maintaining them. And so we,
21 we do have a fairly active program to promote this,
22 but, you know, it is a big city and there are a lot
23 of people in it and not everyone is paying attention
24 to this particular issue.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: No, we appreciate
all the great work that the Fire Department has been

3 doing. I think hopefully with this discussion
4 because of this bill that we can encourage, ah,
5 property owner to really work together with FDNY, ah,
6 to really promote, ah, safeties, fire safety
7 emergency, um, in every building, um, especially
8 these older buildings in our district. Thank you
9 very much.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
11 Member. Now I'll be calling on Council Member
12 Rosenthal for a question. If any other council
13 members have a question please raise your hand or
14 else after this we'll be moving on to the public
15 testimony.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, wait, before we
17 go to, ah, ah, Council Member Rosenthal I just wanted
18 to acknowledge the presence of Council Member Powers.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

21 Um, you know, I've heard Commissioner La Rocca state
22 in her testimony that my bill about the party or
23 whatever terraces would significantly burden DOB's
24 inspection budget and I respect that totally. If we
25 could just put in a pin in that for one second. Can
you speak to any problems that DOB inspectors have

3 encountered with the, um, with these terraces or
4 small balconies? And later on I would love feedback
5 from both the Fire Department and Department of
6 Buildings on this bill.

7 COMMISSIONER LA ROCCA: Certainly. Um,
8 so putting a pin in, in staffing considerations, um,
9 certainly welcome the opportunity to talk more about,
10 ah, what drove the bill although you alluded to it in
11 your previous question, Council Member. Um, from our
12 perspective, um, you know, to your point about
13 whether inspectors have voiced concerns I have not
14 heard. But, again, you know, we have, ah, property
15 owners who already have an established requirement to
16 maintain their building, which includes any, um, ah,
17 fixtures on the exterior of a building, ah, such as a
18 fire escape, um, um, as well as the heightened, um,
19 ah, workload for our buildings that are six stories
20 or greater, um, where obviously Local Law 11 applies.
21 So, um, from our mind's eye, ah, certainly any
22 opportunity to talk to the council about ways we can
23 improve, um, the maintenance and safety of a building
24 is one we would, ah, value. So I certainly would
25 value that conversation.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If there are no more
4 questions, um, we will now be moving on to public
5 testimony. Um, as a reminder, um, unlike in in-
6 person hearings where we call on a panel, we'll be
7 calling on individuals on a one-by-one basis. Once,
8 once your name is called a member of our staff will
9 unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will set a timer
10 and announce that you may begin. Your testimony will
11 be limited to three people, two minutes, I'm sorry.
12 Um, today first we're gonna be hearing from Joseph
13 Condon, followed by Barika Williams, Albert
14 [inaudible].

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 JOSEPH CONDON: Ah, good afternoon, ah,
17 everyone, council members, ah, committee chairs.
18 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My
19 name is Joseph Condon. This testimony is provided on
20 behalf the Community Housing Improvement Program,
21 which is an organization representing thousands of
22 small- and medium-sized rent stabilized housing
23 providers, ah, throughout New York City. We are
24 focusing the testimony on Intro 1146-B because it has
25 the most severe impact on, ah, housing providers and
their residents, ah, of all the bills being

3 considered today. We do understand that safety is
4 the number one priority here, um, and we do agree
5 with that goal. However, we do have some concerns
6 with the lack of tools available, ah, right now, ah,
7 to deal with the real-life circumstances that will be
8 forced upon owners and their tenants because of 1146-
9 B. In particular, um, the, the bill would turn
10 buildings into construction sites. It would disrupt
11 tenant lives for months, ah, potentially requiring
12 relocation of tenants and their families during that
13 time. Ah, there are also other concerns. Ah, cost
14 of compliance is a major concern. Logistics of
15 accessing tenant apartments is a major concern, ah,
16 especially if there are collier conditions or other
17 types of conditions already existing in the
18 apartment, ah, and of course just accomplishing the
19 building-wide installation within the timeframe. And
20 on top of all that this bill is being consequated,
21 ah, during an economic recession, ah, the depths of
22 which are still unknown. Um, but just as an example
23 of the disruption, ah, you can look at the
24 difficulties associated with a similar situation that
25 occurs when having to install or repipe cooking gas
lines throughout a building. In that situation, each

3 apartment must be repiped, just like would be
4 required under 1146-B. In those situations, you
5 know, six months is a, is a normal timeframe.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 JOSEPH CONDON: I just want to say thank
8 you to the committee for considering, ah, comments
9 and, um, we would be happy to work on the details of
10 1146-B to, ah, limit disruption and dislocation of
11 tenants, ah, and address all the logistical concerns
12 as well as the cost concerns. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, I just want to
14 say thank you so much for your testimony and being
15 clear and concise, ah, with it. I think if everybody
16 can, can do that we can hear from, ah, the amount of
17 people who have signed up to testify, which is a
18 large number. So, ah, I, I think you've set a fairly
19 decent precedent outside of going over just a little
20 bit of, of how the testimony can be received, ah, in
21 a way that's very productive for us to make a
22 determination on continuing or not continuing with
23 this bill. So thank you so much for your testimony.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
25 we'll be hearing from Barika Williams, followed by
Anne Corta, followed by Tanya Friedberg.

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: TIME STARTS NOW.

3 BARIKA WILLIAMS: [inaudible], um, and
4 per Chair Cornegy I'll try to keep it brief, so I'll,
5 I'll pick some of the pieces. I just want to thank,
6 ah, the committees for, for having me here. My name
7 is Barika Williams. I'm the...

8 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Wait, wait, Barika,
9 we can, we can barely hear you, I'm sorry.

10 BARIKA WILLIAMS: Can you hear me? OK.
11 Is this any better? Better?

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yeah, much better.

13 BARIKA WILLIAMS: All right.

14 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Please start over
15 and can you start her time over, that was my fault.

16 BARIKA WILLIAMS: No, no. Ah, my name is
17 Barika Williams. I'm the executive director of the
18 Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development,
19 or ANHD, and I want to say thank you to Chair
20 Cornegy, to Chair Borelli, and members of the
21 committee for having me here today to speak. Ah, I'm
22 speaking on behalf of both ANHD and for our 80-plus
23 neighborhood-based affordable housing and equitable
24 economic development organizations that we serve
25 across New York City. Um, and to hop right to the

3 point, um, I'm specifically semi-speaking about the
4 impact of Intro, um, 1146-B. Um, ah, we understand,
5 similar to the previous, ah, ah, testimony that the
6 priority here is, is safety and security of tenants
7 and residents, um, and very much understand and
8 support that intent, ah, but have serious concerns
9 about the proposed, ah, bill's impact to specifically
10 small homeowners, affordable housing stock, um,
11 public housing, and generally, ah, the potential
12 impact, the, the disparate impact for communities of
13 color and immigration communities. Um, so
14 specifically want to speak to the cost of affordable,
15 to affordable housing developers, so this is
16 obviously the installation of sprinklers would
17 potentially add a huge cost to eligible buildings.
18 Um, it doesn't, the bill doesn't address how those
19 costs would be absorbed by affordable housing
20 developers which operate within the confines of
21 government subsidy and government support. Um, ah,
22 normally and traditionally, ah, our members come back
23 to folks like [inaudible] the city like HPD in order
24 to make large-scale infrastructure improvements in
25 investments, um, and there are a number of programs,
for example, the Green Housing Preservation Program,

2 that are set up to be able to do, ah, these kind of
3 infrastructure investments and so absent some sort of
4 capital pool of funds it's not clear how affordable
5 housing, um, projects, um, and developments would be
6 able to absorb and handle these costs. Um, this is
7 prior to, ah, but only exacerbated by in light of
8 COVID where many of our buildings have...

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 BARIKA WILLIAMS: OK. Have faced cuts of
11 up to 20% in their rent rolls. The two other things
12 that I'll say is, um, addressing access to credit for
13 small homeowners and recognizing that it's
14 specifically black and brown homeowners will not have
15 access to credit to address this the same way, that
16 our understanding is it is an eligible MCI expense,
17 um, and that there is also is no provision or and
18 it's not clear if NYCHA could comply with this bill.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Wait. So, so, ah,
21 Barika, on behalf of ANHD I, I felt like you had some
22 recommendations to get us to a place of safety that
23 didn't include, ah, what you are, ah, what you're
24 detailing as onerous, ah, kind of ways of
25 implementation. If you could just take a minute to,

3 ah, I'm going extend you the courtesy, I know you
4 have a recommendation.

5 BARIKA WILLIAMS: Yes, well...

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: At least, at least
7 one recommendation.

8 BARIKA WILLIAMS: So I think our, our
9 recommendation and, and, ah, would be that, that any
10 sort of, um, ah, mandate around sprinklers would need
11 to be paired with a, a pool of capital funds both for
12 small homeowners and small landlords who don't have
13 the same access to credit, especially understanding
14 that we know that this is gonna hit black and brown
15 homeowners, immigrant homeowners, and black and brown
16 small businesses, which are small landlords, um, who
17 are not gonna be able to access those funds, ah, let
18 alone be able to afford it, but then likely not get
19 the same, um, ah, credit access and recognition from,
20 from banks and lenders, um, and then, ah, a pool of
21 money as well for, for affordable housing, um, ah,
22 landlords and, and property managers, ah, so that
23 they can then go and access a zero interest pool of
24 funds to be able to make any modifications that are
25 proposed. So we, we've just got to understand that
the expectation that affordable housing projects are

3 able to make any of these improvements without a pool
4 of, of funds to, to support the implementation, ah,
5 is, is, um, highly unlikely and unrealistic.

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, thank
7 you for your testimony, and thank you for the
8 recommendation.

9 BARIKA WILLIAMS: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next up we're going
11 to be hearing from Ann Heaney-Korchak, followed by
12 Christopher Athineos, followed by Jan Lee.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now. Ann,
14 you're on mute.

15 ANN HEANEY-KORCHAK: I apologize, sorry.
16 Um, I'm a landlord to 20 tenants on the Upper West
17 Side in District 6. Um, I spoke to an engineer about
18 installing sprinklers in each of our apartments and
19 he said it cost me \$20,000 per unit to do this work.
20 Ah, the COVID crisis has exhausted all of our
21 resources and we simply cannot afford to do, you
22 know, work of this cope. Um, but small building
23 owners like myself, you know, have lots of questions.
24 Um, firstly, ah, DEP agree that we have the
25 infrastructure to support sprinkler systems to all of
these buildings? Are there enough licensed and

3 qualified contractors to do this work in New York
4 City? Does the DOB have enough staff to do the
5 inspections in a timely manner? Will Landmarks allow
6 me to install a water tank on my roof? Will APS be
7 responsible for dealing with a tenant who has not
8 left her apartment in 20 years and won't give us
9 access to do this installation? Much of New York
10 City's housing stock is old. Retrofitting a 120-
11 year-old building that my family owns is near
12 impossible to implement while the building is
13 occupied. I offer this solution for fire safety.
14 Let's increased the funding to the FDNY budget so
15 that they have enough personnel, enough firehouses,
16 and enough equipment to quickly respond to all of our
17 calls. They are our greatest resource in protecting
18 people and property. Thanks for your attention.

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank, thank you
19 for your testimony. As, as it was said earlier,
20 we're gonna hear from stakeholders from the entire
21 city, whether it's homeowners, fire safety, um, ah,
22 experts, ah, ah, advocates, and I, I think it's
23 important to hear every single person's voice and not
24 to mute that voice and that's what these hearings are
25 about. So thank you for your testimony.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Um, next
4 we'll be hearing from, um, Christopher Athineos,
5 followed by Jan Lee, followed by Hal Dorfman.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 CHRISTOPHER ATHINEOS: Hi, my name is
8 Christopher Athineos. I'm a small property owner
9 from Brooklyn and, um, I'm here to emphasize that,
10 ah, and oppose 1146-B because, um, you know, our
11 buildings have a building that's built in 1850.
12 There would be no way, ah, for us to feasibly, um,
13 and physically, ah, make such an installation. It's
14 just impossible. I mean, we have, it's a landmark
15 building. Inside we have very ornate, you know,
16 landmark plaster moldings that, ah, it would create
17 such disruption to the tenants. I mean, it's not
18 even that, I mean, cost is like astronomical, but
19 even you gave me the money to do it we still would
20 not be able to do it. It's not a matter of, um, you
21 know, of course it's a matter of money, but it's not
22 even, for me even if you gave it to me we still would
23 not be able to do it. I mean, I'm not being
24 sarcastic but, I mean, you might as well just knock
25 the building down and build up a new building. And,
and for new construction I can clearly see the need

3 and, and the requirement to put in new, to put in
4 sprinklers. I mean, it makes sense. When we build
5 new buildings we make them energy efficient. We make
6 them, um, safer than the buildings that were built so
7 many years ago. But, um, you know, from, just
8 telling you from someone who has his boots on the
9 ground it's just not feasible. Um, I have building,
10 a larger building, 30 units, that has solar panels on
11 the roof. I talked to a plumber. He said he would
12 need a water tank on the roof. My roof is full of
13 solar panels. I don't know I would put structurally,
14 I don't think, ah, it would support additional
15 weight, not to mention if we put a big tank on my
16 roof I wouldn't have any sun to save energy. Um, ah,
17 you know, I just think that you have to consider, ah,
18 increasing the Fire Department budget. I know
19 everyone likes to cut, cut budgets when times are
20 tough. Ah, years ago they cut the Fire Department
21 budget and when you reduce response times that has an
22 effect on fires. I mean, I think, um, the, the best
23 way to fight a fire is to have the experienced men
24 and women of the...

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2 CHRISTOPHER ATHINEOS: ...[inaudible], um,
3 and, and I hope you consider expanding the Fire
4 Department's budget. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, Chris, just for
6 the record, ah, no one wants to cut the budgets of
7 our first responders. Nobody likes to do that.

8 CHRISTOPHER ATHINEOS: I know, but
9 someone has, someone, they've done it before. I'm
10 not saying this, maybe not this committee but, um.

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: No, a hundred
12 percent, and I just had, ah, both you and Ann, how
13 many units in your buildings?

14 CHRISTOPHER ATHINEOS: Um, I, I have, ah,
15 my family owns and operates nine buildings, about 145
16 units, um, in Brooklyn.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: What is, what's
18 the, what's the smaller, ah, height density of, of
19 one of your smaller units?

20 CHRISTOPHER ATHINEOS: I have, ah,
21 buildings as small as three units and buildings that
22 are six stories, ah, high.

23 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK, OK. Thank you,
24 thank you, Chris. Ann?

2 ANN HEANEY-KORCHAK: Ah, yeah, we have
3 two, um, five-story brownstones on the Upper West
4 Side. So, um, they have 10 units in each building,
5 um, so they would each exceed that, you know, 40-
6 foot, um, threshold that you've set in the bill.

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Right, so I'm, I'm
8 just asking so that we as a, as a, you know, as the
9 people that are listening can actually get a picture
10 of what, what these units look like.

11 ANN HEANEY-KORCHAK: Right.

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: And, and what kind
13 of density we're talking about, right? So, so I'm
14 not gonna put you on the spot, but just so we can...

15 ANN HEANEY-KORCHAK: Yeah, no, yeah, it
16 makes sense.

17 CHRISTOPHER ATHINEOS: Most of them are
18 brownstones. The highest one for me is the six-story
19 building. And I apologize if I sound a little like
20 fire in my voice or fire in my belly but, um, you
21 know, I'm just speaking from the heart.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: No, thank you,
23 Christopher, for your testimony.

24 CHRISTOPHER ATHINEOS: Thank you.
25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Um, next
3 we're gonna be hearing from Jan Lee, followed by Hal
4 Dorfman, followed by Peter Varsalona.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 JAN LEE: Thank you to both of the
7 chairs. Um, Chair Borelli, you hit so many high
8 points on this and, and so glad that your hitting
9 those high points, because it's the same questions
10 that we have. And I want to thank Council Member
11 Chin for having the ear...

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you.

13 JAN LEE: ...listening to the people in
14 her district, particularly small property owners and,
15 and certainly our seniors. It's so important. I,
16 um, a third-generation property owner. We have owned
17 two tenement buildings in Chinatown for going on 96
18 years. We have provided excellent service to our
19 low-income, 100% rent-stabilized tenants. And it is
20 through that lens I want to express to you it is, the
21 spirit of your 1146-B is great. We all want to
22 preserve life. We all want to extend the lives of
23 our tenants and make sure that they are comfortable
24 and safe, as we have done for 96 years. So it makes
25 sense to ask us first and am disappointed that since

3 2018 small property owners haven't been consulted
4 about this in any organized way. With that said,
5 relocation stress syndrome is a real thing. And I
6 urge the council to really look into relocation
7 stress syndrome and how that actually can diminish
8 and kill many more people than what your bill is
9 designed to do. What it purports to do is preserve
10 life. If we turn our tenants' lives upside down, as
11 they're trying to get their lives back on track as we
12 emerge from COVID-19 it is simply not fair. And I'm
13 insulted that, that the only thing that, um, the
14 Chair Grodenchik could say is maybe we can give you a
15 loan. We don't want more loans. We are in debt.
16 You don't understand. We cannot be thrust further
17 into debt as we emerge from COVID-19. And many of us
18 don't qualify for loans. So please don't insult us
19 by saying that the best you can do is give us loans.
20 So with that said, just like Christopher, you can
21 hear in my voice, I have fire in my voice because we
22 absolutely cannot bear the responsibility. Don't
23 take a fire hose approach to something that really
24 should be done with surgical...

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

3 JAN LEE: ...with surgical precision. We
4 cannot drop this, this bomb on, on all of New York
5 City expecting everybody to recover healthily with
6 bills like this. So please reconsider and please
7 withdraw this bill permanently. Thank you so much.

8 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Jan, for
9 your, ah, testimony.

10 JAN LEE: Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
12 we'll be hearing from Hal Dorfman, followed by Peter
13 Varsalona, followed by Kate Elvin Yale.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 HAL DORFMAN: Yes, my name is Hal
16 Dorfman. I am a registered architect, and it's my
17 duty to implement the laws that the City Council
18 passes. I would like to say that to save a life is
19 to save the world, but this bill, 1146-B, is designed
20 not to do that. It's designed with the most lowest
21 amount of deaths as reported by [inaudible] Hogan, of
22 64 in 2019. We're at the safest point in our history
23 in terms of fire safety. We have the most
24 professional, the most professional, full-time fire
25 department of any city in the country. Our buildings
are designed to be safe from the 38 code, the 68

3 code, and now with the 2008 code requiring all
4 buildings except one- and two-family houses to be
5 fully sprinkler. We have laws that have just been
6 implemented in 2018, Local Law 113, which requires
7 all new photoelectric smoke detectors be installed.
8 These smoke detectors can last from seven to 10 years
9 and have proven to provide the most safety for people
10 to alert them. The other thing I must say is that as
11 a person who has to read these laws that are
12 implemented it's important to create an education
13 campaign for not just architects, engineers, but
14 everyone. All the people, all the tenants need to
15 know what their responsibility is. You make us put
16 cards on the inside of apartments. Also, I am a
17 landlord of a 43-foot-high building with eight
18 tenants that has fire-rated doors and 12-inch masonry
19 walls in the hallway. It is a safe buildings that
20 has existed for over a hundred years. And nobody has
21 died in that building. I thank you very much, but I
22 believe that...

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 HAL DORFMAN: ...Intro 1146 should be
25 tabled and, and should not continue. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your
4 testimony, Mr. Dorfman, and thank you for your expert
5 testimony. We, we hoped to hear from architects, ah,
6 today. So thank you for chiming in.

7 HAL DORFMAN: If you ever need me to
8 participate in a committee, I have participated as an
9 industry advisory representative to New York City
10 Department of Buildings for the last 33 years, and
11 I'm a past president of the New York Society of
12 Architects, and my society wrote the codes since 1916
13 before they were digitized and taken over by the
14 Building Department and now the IBC. So only happy
15 to participate in committees of the City Council. I,
16 I'm available any time. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, thank
18 you, Mr. Dorfman. Somebody from our office will
19 reach out so we can be in contact. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
21 we'll be hearing from Peter Varsalona, followed by
22 Kate Elvin Yale, followed by Avi G.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 PETER VARSALONA: Hi, my name is Peter
25 Varsalona. I'm a New York State licensed
professional engineer and principal of Rand

3 Engineering and Architecture. I also serve on the
4 Board of Council of New York Cooperatives and
5 Condominiums. I'm speaking today to voice opposition
6 to Intro number 1146-B. For all unit owners the
7 disruptive impact to the interior of their apartments
8 would just be overwhelming. Ceilings would need to
9 be opened to permit installation of new sprinkler
10 piping and heads and drop ceilings would need to be
11 added where none exist. Ceiling lights, fans,
12 plumbing systems, piping, and mechanical vents would
13 need to be relocated or removed in connection with
14 this work. Residents may even need to vacate their
15 apartments depending on the extent of these
16 alterations. In addition, a new sprinkler system
17 would require extensive infrastructure improvements.
18 The construction requirements for high-rise
19 residential buildings, those greater than 125 feet,
20 are frankly staggering. A dedicated fire or combined
21 service would be needed in buildings, along with new
22 baffle prevention and [inaudible] equipment. The
23 water storage tanks on top of older residential
24 buildings are just too small and usually only have a
25 3500-gallon fire standpipe reserve. Those would need
to be replaced with 15,000-gallon tanks or higher.

3 The steel supports for those tanks are inadequate and
4 need to be enlarged or supplemented. Many buildings
5 require sprinkler booster pumps to increase pressure.
6 Others require fire alarms. All sprinkler system
7 upgrades require fire alarm notifications. So the
8 fire alarm system in the building, if one even
9 exists, would have to be upgraded or otherwise
10 installed. Um, there's also large electrical
11 requirements for fire pumps and some actually require
12 emergency power generation. Although the
13 installation of sprinklers throughout all residential
14 buildings is well intentioned, the use of sprinklers
15 should not be seen as a failsafe for preventing
16 civilian deaths, injury, or damage that can occur in
17 a fire, which are already at historic lows. You
18 know, the use of fire-rated construction and
19 prevalence and effectiveness of smoke and alarm
20 detection devices, rapid fire department response
21 times, the adoption of the 2018 code as Hal
22 mentioned, all those have really helped to keep these
23 numbers low. For these reasons I, we ask...

24
25
26 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2 PETER VARSALONA: ...[inaudible] strongly
3 reconsider the bill in its entirety, and thank you
4 very much for allowing me to express this viewpoint.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So, so Mr.
6 Varsalona, I mean, var?

7 PETER VARSALONA: Varsalona, yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Varsalona, um, you
9 gave a litany of things that would have to happen for
10 effectively to add a sprinkler system. You got a
11 price tag for that?

12 PETER VARSALONA: This is clearly in the
13 upper six figures for most buildings that are
14 considered high rise. The lower-rise buildings,
15 meaning ones that are six stories or less, you're
16 looking at probably about a half a million dollars,
17 depending on, let's say up to about 40,000 to 50,000
18 square feet. Um, so it's, it's a significant cost
19 investment, beside all the things that everyone
20 talked about in terms of disruption. We just can't
21 find a real practical way to do this without
22 requiring most tenants to leave their apartments.

23 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 PETER VARSALONA: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Ah, next
3 we're going to be hearing from, um, Avi, um, Avi G,
4 followed by Lyric Thompson, followed by Christopher
5 Widelo.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now. I'm
7 not sure Avi is on.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: OK. Sorry about
9 that. Next we're gonna hear from Kate Elvin Yale,
10 followed by Avi G, followed by Lyric Thompson.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 KATE ELVIN YALE: Can you hear me?

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes.

14 KATE ELVIN YALE: OK, thank you. Ah,
15 thank you for holding this hearing. Um, we oppose
16 Intro 1146-B because the expense and disruption of
17 this bill would cause, it's, it's not in the best
18 interest of our tenants. We've owned our building
19 for 35 years. We know everybody who lives there.
20 And, um, and as Councilwoman Chin and the Fire
21 Department said earlier tenant education is key. We
22 inspect our apartments with our tenants when they
23 take occupancy and every single year. We make sure
24 they know doors have to be closed. We make sure that
25 they know the batteries need to be in their smoke

3 detectors. We go over the information on the back of
4 the door to make sure they understand how to leave
5 the building. We look at the fire escape with them
6 and make sure there's no bars on the windows. We
7 don't allow smoking in the building and we don't
8 allow candles in the building. When we see
9 overloaded sockets we work with the tenant to upgrade
10 the wiring and to, um, put in circuit breakers where,
11 where there were none before. Um, we have batteries,
12 battery lights in the hallways to make sure ah, if,
13 if a system goes out or there's a fire or it's night
14 people can find their way out because they're
15 supported by the batteries. The stairways are metal.
16 There's multiple exit points for our 21 tenants. Ah,
17 they can easily walk over our roof to the neighboring
18 roofs. The fire department has easy access to our
19 50-foot-tall building. The proposed sprinkler bill
20 would cost us \$500,000. That's more than our annual
21 rent roll, and it would necessitate cutting back on
22 many of the services we try to provide our tenants.
23 In particular, we would have to get rid of our super,
24 who is there on site every single day to make every,
25 make sure everything is running smoothly and
properly, that the stairs are clear, that there's no

2 clutter, that we know every problem that's going on
3 to keep our tenants safe.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 KATE ELVIN YALE: OK, one last thing.
6 Funding for the sprinklers takes, takes away from
7 what tenants are looking for today, which is washers,
8 dryers, dishwashers. In time of COVID they need
9 adequate wiring. We need to put our money into the
10 services tenants need. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you, Ms.
12 Elvin, for your testimony.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
14 we're gonna be hearing from Avi G, followed by Lyric
15 Thompson, followed by Christopher Widelo.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 DEVONE NASH: Um, I'm not Avi, um, I was
18 just, um, logging in to see the, to see the, um, to
19 just be a part of the Zoom. Hello? You can hear me?

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes, we can hear you.
21 Committee counsel?

22 DEVONE NASH: Yeah, I'm, um, I'm just
23 Devone Nash. I'm in a shelter right now. Um, ah,
24 I've been in the shelter system for like three years
25 and I have yet to get a voucher and I'm, it's like it

2 costs like \$6391 a month and I'm like, all I need is
3 like \$2500 for rent. And I'm [inaudible] it actually
4 costs, and I was like can someone help me? Um, my
5 name is Devone Nash. My email is
6 Devoneenash@gmail.com and I'm in the family shelter
7 system with my nephew, Errol Smith. So if anyone can
8 reach out to me and help me it would be very well
9 appreciated. Thank you very much. And the sprinkler
10 systems are a good idea because some of these old
11 buildings they have older people in them and they
12 can't get downstairs really fast, and so with the
13 sprinklers in there it kind of like diminishes the
14 fire 'cause like a lot of old people hoard a lot of
15 things and so this way you can kind of get in there
16 and clean out the apartments and stuff like that, you
17 know, just a suggestion. Have a great day, people.

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Mr. Nash, somebody
19 from my office will reach out to you.

20 DEVONE NASH: Thank you very much. I
21 appreciate it. Have a wonderful day.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: [inaudible].

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Now we're
24 going to be hearing from Avi Gross, followed by Lyric
25 Thompson, followed by Christopher Widelo.

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Are you there? OK,
4 um, sorry. Next we're gonna be moving on to Lyric
5 Thompson, followed by Christopher Widelo.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 LYRIC THOMPSON: Hi everybody, my name is
8 Lyric Thompson. Hello, Council Member Cornegy.
9 Hello, Council Member Borelli, who is on Facebook.
10 I'm here to speak about another aspect of fire safety
11 and that is fire-rated egress doors. The entrance
12 doors of multiple dwellings are supposed to be in
13 compliance with NFPA 80. Now, HPD is the agency
14 responsible for enforcing this standard. It's DOB
15 standard, but HPD is responsible for enforcing it.
16 That would be multiple dwelling 50-A. Unfortunately,
17 HPD seems to not know these standards. We had over
18 300 inspections on our, on our door before I
19 realized, I realized that the door was not fire
20 rated. HPD came out, wrote and removed violations,
21 and that defective door hardware had to be removed by
22 the Fire Department before it burned our building to
23 the ground. Now I cannot help but think that at
24 least one of those 300 inspectors should have noticed
25 that this door was not up to the basic safety

3 standard. So, Council Member Cornegy, my question to
4 you, sir, is are we going to wait until someone dies
5 from this or will you take it upon yourself to call
6 HPD and AnnMarie Santiago into your chamber and ask
7 why, why 300 inspections later I'm still fighting
8 with HPD over the standards of a fire-rated door? I
9 did not come up with these standards. They were
10 written down in code. I could forward them to her.
11 However, nothing seems, I mean, she just blows it off
12 like it doesn't matter. Now, I'm lucky that the, the
13 two tenants that caught that door malfunction
14 notified us and then notified the Fire Department
15 before somebody got hurt. I would rather somebody
16 not have to die before this issue is addressed. So
17 what say you, sir?

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I will call the
19 commissioner, ah, but I don't actually have a chamber
20 to call her into, but I will, I will call her and
21 make her aware that we know that, as we're discussing
22 fire safety, that there are some deficiencies...

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: ...[inaudible]
25 tenants. So I will do that.

2 LYRIC THOMPSON: I sent you, I sent you
3 four years of photos that clearly document that HPD
4 does not know these standards. So perhaps we could
5 also, in addition to having a conversation with Ms.
6 Santiago, ask the commissioner of DOB, Commissioner
7 La Rocca, if she would be willing to have a training
8 class so that these inspectors are educated with
9 regards to the standards they're supposed to enforce?
10 Can we do that, too?

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'm sorry. Yes, as
12 safety obviously is a priority, as evidenced by this
13 hearing, I will absolutely do that. And, and thank
14 you, Lyric, for being such an advocate, not just for
15 people in your building, but for people in the system
16 who need advocacy. Thank you.

17 LYRIC THOMPSON: Well, I'm trying, and
18 I'm still waiting to hear from you, by the way.

19 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yeah, we'll be,
20 we'll be [inaudible]. OK.

21 LYRIC THOMPSON: Thanks.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Lyric.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
24 we'll be hearing from Christopher Widelo, followed by
25

2 Carrie Farrell, sorry, Kelly Farrell, um, ah, sorry,
3 um, followed by Laura Rothrock.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 CHRISTOPHER WIDELO: Hi, good afternoon,
6 ah, Chair Cornegy. My name is Chris Widelo. I am
7 the director of external affairs for the New York
8 State Association for Affordable Housing, otherwise
9 known as NYSFAFH, and I would like to thank you for
10 the opportunity to provide the following comments on
11 bills being heard, ah, by the committee today. Ah,
12 we're the trade association, NYSFAFH is a trade
13 association for New York's affordable housing
14 industry with nearly 400 members, including
15 developers, lenders, investors, attorneys, ah,
16 contractors, architects, ah, all those that are
17 active in the financing, construction, and operation
18 of affordable housing. While fire safety is an
19 important priority in development, rehab and
20 preservation work, and building management, ah, Intro
21 1146-B's approach of mandating sprinkler systems in
22 all residential buildings over 40 feet is infeasible.
23 The cost associated with the piping, water service,
24 and with making space for the equipment and buildings
25 that weren't designed to include the space are

3 astronomical. This would not be possible for not,
4 non-for-profits and small, ah, owners of, ah, the
5 existing older affordable housing stock. To comply
6 would mean we'd need to dig up and install
7 infrastructure on the streets and sidewalks and
8 burden already very challenged, ah, DEP
9 infrastructure. The construction work of all the
10 street level and on the buildings would be incredibly
11 disruptive to tenants as well. Additionally, older
12 buildings would more commonly, ah, will more commonly
13 have asbestos and lead challenges, which is a safety
14 concern and additional costs, ah, for remediation.
15 As an apparently MCI-eligible expense, there is also
16 the potential for some of these costs to be passed
17 through to tenants, which is inconceivable, given the
18 current environment. Um, finally, you know,
19 affordable housing building owners cannot bear the
20 cost of this measure, however well-intentioned this
21 legislation is. The smaller and nonprofit owners are
22 simply trying to stay afloat during the COVID crisis,
23 which has been devastating in terms of reduced rent
24 rolls and increased maintenance and utility costs.
25 The council should be focused on how to reduce the
cost to providers of affordable housing and...

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 CHRISTOPHER WIDELo: Thanks very much for
4 your time and consideration.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, Christopher, do
6 you have any recommendations on behalf of NYSFAH?

7 CHRISTOPHER WIDELo: I would be happy to,
8 ah, send some your way if, if I can send them to you
9 at a later time.

10 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Absolutely. Thank
11 you.

12 CHRISTOPHER WIDELo: Thank you, Council
13 Member.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
15 we'll be hearing from Kelly Farrell, followed by
16 Laura Rothrock.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 KELLY FARRELL: Good afternoon. My name
19 is Kelly Farrell and I'm from the Rent Stabilization
20 Association, which is a real estate group that
21 represents 25,000 diverse owners and managers who
22 collectively manage over one million units of housing
23 in every neighborhood and community throughout the
24 city. Um, we're here today to speak in opposition to
25 Intro 1146-B, the sprinkler bill. I also want to

3 note that we've submitted testimony on the number of
4 other bills, most notably in support of 2151-A, but
5 we're going to use our time today to speak in
6 opposition to this bill. As you've heard from a
7 number of owners so far today, this bill would create
8 an incredible logistical and financial burden on
9 owners throughout the city. Obviously there's gonna
10 be some impacts on tenants and the disruption in
11 their, in their lives, um, the dangers, the, um,
12 exposure to the lead paint and masonry and asbestos
13 that the, um, the work would inflict upon them, and
14 then potentially months-long disruption, um,
15 movement, going elsewhere. But, um, given what's
16 going on in the city at this time it really is, um,
17 the precarious state of real estate, you know, this
18 measure, the financial hardships, um, vacancies are
19 at an all-time high. Rent collection is at an all-
20 time low. The housing instability, um, tenant
21 protection has created an inability to recoup any of
22 these costs and along with the Climate Mobilization
23 Act also that's now requiring rent-stabilized
24 tenants, um, buildings, to engage in, um, other
25 costly measures. It's just, there's just no way that
this is a feasible request, um, of owners throughout

2 the city. Um, the residential estimates and the
3 costs are just so high that there's just no way that
4 it's feasible for sprinkler retrofits to be
5 undertaken in the residential situations at this
6 time.

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Ms.
8 Farrell, for your testimony.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Um, as a
10 reminder, there's no need to raise your hand. Next
11 we'll be hearing from Laura Rothrock, followed by
12 Mary Ann Rothman, followed by Melissa Barbour.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 LAURA ROTHROCK: Good afternoon, Council
15 Member Cornegy and members of the New York City
16 Council. My name is Laura Rothrock and I'm providing
17 testimony on behalf of the New York Coalition of Code
18 Consultations, also known as NYCCC. NYCCC is a
19 nonprofit trade organization whose members specialize
20 in securing construction and development approvals
21 from municipal agencies as well as building code and
22 zoning consulting. I'm testifying today in support
23 of Intro 1917, a different topic than has been
24 discussed so far, which allows for self-certification
25 for certain work after the issuance of the work

3 without a permit violation. We applaud Council
4 Member Cornegy for introducing this bill to amend
5 Local Law 158, which takes away the ability for an
6 applicant to self-certify construction work and
7 related documents for one year if there was a work
8 without a permit violation issued on any part of that
9 building. NYCCC supports the intention of Local Law
10 158, which was to protect residential tenants from
11 unsafe conditions and harassment. However, the law
12 has had unintended consequences, which Intro 1917
13 corrects. Self-certification is an important tool
14 for commercial tenants and for the Department of
15 Buildings because it allows licensed professionals to
16 expedite the process of obtaining plan approvals
17 without compromising safety or putting additional
18 strain on DOB resources. This bill is particularly
19 important for commercial tenants who are fitting out
20 their lease spaces. Commercial tenants should not
21 have to be penalized for violations caused by other
22 tenants in the same building and do not have to float
23 their businesses for an extended period of time while
24 they await approval to fit out their spaces. In
25 summary, Intro 1917 provides a practical solution to
remove unfair burdens and we hope this committee will

3 vote in favor of the bill. We thank you for your
4 consideration.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, Laura, thank
6 you so much for your testimony and for reminding me
7 that there were actually other bills on the agenda.

8 LAURA ROTHROCK: [laughs]

9 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Some, some of which
10 don't ah, ah, cause such a, a stir, an uproar. Ah,
11 thank you for your testimony.

12 LAURA ROTHROCK: Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
14 we'll be hearing from Mary Ann Rothman, followed by
15 Melissa Barbour.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 MARY ANN ROTHMAN: Ah, good afternoon.
18 My name is Mary Ann Rothman, ah, and I thank you for
19 this opportunity to add my voice to the chorus in
20 opposition to Intro 1146-B. Ah, I'm the executive
21 director of the Council of New York Cooperatives and
22 Condominiums. It is a membership organization, ah,
23 where more than 170,000 New York families make their
24 homes, ah, and our member buildings span the full
25 economic spectrum, from very modest income-restricted
housing to solid middle-class apartment complexes and

3 upscale dwellings. I point that in housing co-ops
4 and condominiums everyone is both a tenant and a
5 landlord, ah, and therefore we are subject to all of
6 the issues that have already been raised and which I
7 will continue to raise. The COVID-19 pandemic has
8 hit our members hard. People have lost their
9 livelihoods, their loved ones, their neighbors,
10 colleagues, workers, friends. Resources are
11 strained, but New York property taxes have reached
12 high resources, and buildings must still comply with
13 the FISP program of façade inspection, the carbon-
14 reducing mandates of Local Law 97, and with many more
15 requirements of city and state. I would hope that
16 Intro 114-B would not become one of those
17 requirements. Most of the buildings affected by this
18 legislation are noncombustible buildings and history
19 has shown the ability of FDNY to respond quickly and
20 to control fires within these apartments and save
21 lives. Sprinklers are not a panacea as they can be
22 slow and less effective against some fires. Our
23 colleague, Peter Varsalona, has detailed for you the
24 complexity of installing sprinklers and their
25 astronomical costs. Mandating this tremendous
capital expenditure will...

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

4 MARY ANN ROTHMAN: ...divert scarce funds
5 and attention from the other urgent goals in our
6 city. Please do not pass this bill. Thank you for
7 the opportunity to express our views.

8 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you, Ms.,
9 Ms. Rothman. Could you please just, um, state, ah,
10 your organization again for the record?

11 MARY ANN ROTHMAN: It's called the
12 Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums and
13 we are submitting written testimony, ah, with
14 comments on all of the, on more of the bills.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you. Do
16 you have any recommendations at this time from your
17 organization?

18 MARY ANN ROTHMAN: Well, I'm, I'm
19 pleased, I'm pleased with a lot of the
20 recommendations I've heard already. Um, education is
21 vitally important. It was a pleasure to see Julian
22 Bazel here. He has been a speaker at many of our
23 conferences, helping us educate our members, ah,
24 about, ah, also sorts of safety precautions. Um, ah,
25 you'll hear from another of, of my colleagues about
possibly requiring, um, when a kitchen renovation is

3 done possibly requiring a, a sprinkler retrofit in
4 the kitchen that could be small enough to be based on
5 the domestic water system and kitchens are the source
6 of the tremendous percentage of fires. So that's
7 certainly worth considering.

8 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So this is, this is
9 the reason that I'm asking, um, recommendations
10 because some of them make absolute sense and could be
11 an alternative to the bill, and it could actually
12 cover the safety concerns that we as the council and
13 me as the chair have, but not disproportionately
14 negative, negatively impact our affordable housing
15 stock and/or or small, ah, building operators. So
16 thank you for that. And, and we'll be taking all of
17 these recommendations, compiling them, and then
18 reviewing them just for, for the record.

19 MARY ANN ROTHMAN: Thank you. This has
20 been a fascinating hearing. I thank, I thank you for
21 how well you're running it.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
24 we'll be hearing from Melissa Barbour, followed by
25 Michael Wolfe, who will, sorry, followed by Nathan
Fishman.

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

3 MELISSA BARBOUR: Hi, good afternoon. My
4 name is Melissa Barbour. I wanted to thank, um,
5 everyone for the opportunity to speak today. I work
6 with the Mechanical Contractors Association with New
7 York City licensed fire sprinkler contractors who
8 employ Local 638 Steamfitter Labor. Um, I've worked
9 for the MCA for over 20 years and I've been an
10 advocate for fire sprinkler protection for that time,
11 and I've seen, um, the majority of fire sprinkler
12 legislation be driven by, unfortunately by tragedy.
13 Um, the need for fire sprinklers still is clear.
14 Last week we had a 10-year-old boy critically injured
15 when a fire broke out in Marble Hill. On November 22
16 two lives were lost in a building in Washington
17 Heights. Um, in, in October a 5-year-old boy died of
18 smoke inhalation. Um, some of the reason for this
19 are fires grow hotter and faster than they used to.
20 Flashover is within four minutes usually and the FDNY
21 response time, according to my last resources, and I
22 don't want to contradict, you know, if I'm wrong, is
23 approximately five minutes. The FDNY does do an
24 amazing job. Um, we just think sprinklers would be
25 an additional tool. And I am, I want to be cognizant

3 of everything everyone said today. I think there's
4 really important points being made. I'd just like to
5 be a, I don't think that the bill should be
6 completely disregarded because I think there are some
7 things that we can look at further in terms of
8 height, type of construction, building
9 configurations, available water supply. Um, the type
10 of pipe, is a fire pump needed. So I just think we
11 need to be looking at properties. We need to be
12 looking at the code changes and, um, coming together
13 in a response that, that does make our residential
14 apartment building safer and, um, you know, is
15 cognizant of, you know, to develop a policy and plan
16 that will result in a safer city.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you,
18 Melissa. Um, and, and that's kind of, if I'm not
19 mistaken, Barry, who was the bill's original prime
20 sponsor was where, the place that he came from, which
21 was really about safety. So thank you for your
22 perspective and also thank you for your expert, ah,
23 ah, testimony in, in this case. Um, we have heard...

24 MELISSA BARBOUR: I'd like, I'd like to
25 send you some, um, some statistics and some case
studies on some retrofit around the country and in

3 particular Philadelphia, um, looking at the cost and
4 the different types of buildings, too, if that would
5 be OK.

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Oh, that would be,
7 that would be, we, we would like to take in as much
8 information as we possibly can today, as the hearing
9 chair, ah, in an effort to get to a place that,
10 again, doesn't, you know, ah, put safety as a, as a
11 premium priority but doesn't disproportionately
12 negatively impact.

13 MELISSA BARBOUR: Oh, the one thing I
14 forgot to mention and I hope everything listening is,
15 is cognizant of, you know, to please advocate also
16 there are things like the Public Housing Fire Safety
17 Act that Max Rose and Peter King, a bipartisan
18 federal legislation that would provide grants for
19 fire sprinkler protection. There are, there's a bill
20 in New York State Legislature for tax incentives.
21 Um, given, obviously, ah, the fiscal crisis we're in
22 I'm not, you know, ah, I'm aware of that, but I think
23 there are things people should be, you know, I think
24 there are programs and hopefully financing that we
25 can go along with this.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you,
3 Melissa. Jan, I see you shaking your head
4 vehemently. Unfortunately, this is not a forum for
5 debate, ah, but I, I could see that both Jan and Ann
6 are ready for a spirited debate. Unfortunately that
7 won't take place. Honestly, thank you all for your
8 perspectives, ah, and thank you for your expert, um,
9 opinion on this and, and expert testimony. Thank
10 you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Um, I believe Council
12 Member Grodenchik had his hand raised for a question.

13 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yes, please, Barry.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I'm listening
16 intently to everybody and, ah, I'll wait, I think,
17 until the end of the hearing and I, I certainly
18 appreciate the comments of many people, ah, some of
19 whom I know very well, some of whom I'm meeting for
20 the first time today. But I think I'm gonna wait,
21 Mr. Chairman, until, ah, we're done, ah, to talk
22 further. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Barry.

24

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
3 we're gonna hear from Michael Wolfe, followed by
4 Nathan Fishman.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 MICHAEL WOLFE: Good afternoon, council
7 members. I hope you had a nice Thanksgiving and wish
8 to thank all council members for allowing me to
9 present to you day. My name is mic Wolfe. I'm the
10 president of Mid-Borough Management, a full-service
11 management firm representing over 15,000 cooperative
12 condominium and rental apartments in New York City
13 for almost four decades. In addition, I'm the chair
14 of the Real Estate Board of New York Residential
15 Management Council and a member of the board of the
16 Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums.
17 Prior to the pandemic I met with Council Member Barry
18 Grodenchik to discuss this very issue and appreciate
19 his willingness to hear all sides. The primary
20 method of fire protection during the majority of the
21 1900s focused on passive fire protection using fire
22 barriers, fire-rated walls, floors and ceilings that
23 typically diverse a building into areas for fire
24 control. Therefore we do have a system in place.
25 Suggesting that all buildings are [inaudible] is not

3 the correct approach. The New York City Fire
4 Department advises residents in noncombustible
5 buildings to remain in their apartments unless the
6 fire is in their apartment. Clearly, fire spread is
7 not a major concern in such type of construction.
8 The city also mandates smoke and carbon monoxide
9 detectors and signage in each dwelling unit,
10 rightfully so, alerting residents of any smoke or
11 fire condition quickly. Most home fires begin in the
12 kitchen. I had suggested to the councilman during
13 our meeting that adding a sprinkler head during a
14 kitchen renovation is a possibility if the head could
15 be supplied through the domestic system, not
16 requiring a new water line that would add unnecessary
17 cost, demolition, and restoration. Therefore, little
18 by little you'd be retrofitting each kitchen in every
19 apartment in the city. The loss of life is one too
20 many. However, to suggest retrofitting all buildings
21 over 40 feet tall with sprinklers is not realistic
22 for many reasons. We would be talking about millions
23 of dollars in a particular building, including
24 destroying interior finishes that may not be able to
25 be replicated. A 2029 deadline exasperates the
burden of Local Law 97, the Climate Mobilization Act,

3 that added penalties for energy use that is out of
4 the control for so many.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 MICHAEL WOLFE: The pandemic has resulted
7 in extreme financial hardship for so many with
8 residents leaving New York and many not returning.

9 The suggested cost of action of 1146 would add to the
10 extreme cost of living in New York City and reduce
11 its appeal even further. Projected, project cost and
12 disruption, cutting into walls and ceilings to hang
13 pipe, is always disruptive and dirty. When asbestos
14 and lead may be involved the hazard makes work much
15 more complicated and residents will have to relocate.
16 By New York City code residents are advised of safety
17 plans and procedures. We all share the same goal of
18 keeping our neighbors safe, but at what cost? Let us
19 find ways to find relief, not additional burden.

20 Thank you all for your time, and, most importantly,
21 stay well.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, ah, Michael,
23 thank you so much. Your proposal, which is the
24 second time we heard it, I think we heard from
25 Melissa first, she beat you to it, um, ah, of the,
ah, sprinklers in retrofitted kitchens, um, in order

3 to get to the place that the bill suggests that we
4 get how long do you think it would take?

5 MICHAEL WOLFE: It would, it, it...

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: How many years do
7 you think? What are we talking, 10, 15, 20 years?

8 MICHAEL WOLFE: It, it'll be multiple
9 decades at that rate. The, the problem is putting in
10 a new water line, new pump system, new tank. But if
11 there was a way to tap into an existing riser or
12 branch line, which is very easy during a kitchen
13 renovation, adding a sprinkler head to a kitchen in a
14 strategically located place, probably in the vicinity
15 of the stove, would not be a heavy lift or a costly
16 exercise at all.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: And, and, and in
18 your proposal not mandating that to be done
19 immediately, only when there are renovations
20 scheduled in kitchens.

21 MICHAEL WOLFE: Correct.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK.

23 MICHAEL WOLFE: Correct.

24 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you.

25 MICHAEL WOLFE: Thank you for your time.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Um, before we call on
5 our next panelists I'd like to call on Council Member
6 Grodenchik.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I didn't
9 raise my hand, if it was still raised I'm sorry, but
10 I, or it was unraised, so, I'm still here. But I, I
11 like that sprinkler head idea. But we'll talk later.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I was getting ready
14 to say, I was getting ready to say, Barry, make up
15 your mind. Either you want in or you want out.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: No, I'm all
17 right. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: OK, next we're gonna
19 be calling on Nathan Fishman, followed by Neil
20 Davidowitz, followed by Richard Flateau.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 NATHAN FISHMAN: Hi. Um, my name is, ah,
23 Nathan Fishman. I'm an owner and property manager
24 for rent-stabilized apartments in upper Manhattan and
25 the Bronx. The buildings we run are small five-story

3 walkups and six-story buildings. We manage clean
4 properties with no housing violations and have
5 excellent relationships with our tenants. We've a
6 vested interest in keeping fires out of our
7 buildings. We understand the public safety is of
8 utmost importance and that fire prevention is
9 important to protect our tenants. With that being
10 said, I do not think the proposed sprinkler law,
11 Intro 1146-B, would be a good idea. The magnitude of
12 disruption that the project would cause to the
13 tenants would be enormous. The job of installing
14 large water pipes inside of my existing tenants'
15 apartments would simply bother and infuriate my
16 tenants. From my experience, tenants want to be left
17 alone. They want to quietly enjoy their homes with
18 good heat and proper services. The proposed
19 sprinkler law would bring plumbers and construction
20 contractors into their homes. The violent breaking
21 of walls and ceilings, the dust and dirt it would
22 create in these small areas would be terrible. This
23 is a very dirty job. Furthermore, the exposure to
24 lead when you break open the walls and the possible
25 asbestos concerns would be very real. In fact, I
believe that many tenants wouldn't even let us in.

3 They never asked for this work to be done and so they
4 do not want to be bothered. If you actually polled
5 the tenancy I believe they would be very much against
6 such intrusion. They are hard-working people and
7 families and would not appreciate the mess and major
8 inconvenience that would be forced upon them. Air
9 contamination and overall environmental disruption
10 are almost required to accomplish this job. I
11 believe that you are sacrificing both the mental and
12 physical health of the tenants. Additionally and
13 secondarily, the cost of such work to landlords would
14 be larger than any other unfunded mandate ever passed
15 by this council. Estimated at \$20,000 per apartment,
16 the cost of a retrofit for a 25-unit building would
17 be half a million dollars. Small landlords can
18 simply not, can simply not afford this type of major
19 expense. There are other less intrusive ways to
20 accomplish fire safety, like fire extinguishers,
21 smoke detectors, fire blankets, and fire education.
22 They all make much more sense. These are types of
23 things I have in my own home...

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

25 NATHAN FISHMAN: ...to protect my own
family. I ask that you listen to my testimony and

2 consider the tenants and the mess you will make of
3 their homes. Again, speak to them, as I do, and know
4 that they just want to be left alone to enjoy their
5 space and their families.

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, ah, Nathan,
7 thank you so much for your testimony. Um, you
8 mentioned that this is a dirty job. You meant the
9 job of installing sprinklers, not of being a council
10 member, correct?

11 NATHAN FISHMAN: [laughs] The job of, of,
12 the installation work of the sprinklers, obviously,
13 is a very dirty job.

14 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yep, just checking.
15 Thank you for your testimony.

16 NATHAN FISHMAN: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Ah, next
18 I'd like to call on Neil Davidowitz, followed by
19 Richard Flateau.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 NEIL DAVIDOWITZ: Good afternoon and
22 thank you, Chairman Cornegy and Borelli. I
23 appreciate the opportunity to talk before you. My
24 name is Neil Davidowitz and I'm president of
25 [inaudible] New York, a management firm that

3 currently manages 170 residential buildings,
4 encompassing 17,000 apartments, the majority being
5 New York City co-ops and condominiums. The buildings
6 are located in all five boroughs. I also serve on
7 the board of several co-op buildings. I'm speaking
8 today to voice strenuous opposition to 1146-B. I
9 come to you on behalf of a multitude of my clients,
10 who have asked me to share their concern, actually
11 their distress over this proposed bill. I represent
12 many middle-class New Yorkers who understand the
13 astronomical implications of 1146. New Yorkers who
14 are concerned that this bill, coupled with the dire
15 economic situation in this city, will force the
16 possible sale of their homes or the relocation of
17 them outside of the city. The bill would require
18 major structural and nonstructural changes to both
19 building infrastructure and to individual apartments.
20 My clients will have to bear both of those costs.
21 They will be required to pay their pro rata share of
22 huge assessments to effectuate the building component
23 of construction and they'll have to bear 100% of the
24 cost of the work in their apartments. That is beyond
25 onerous. The fundamental question is, is this
necessary to protect New Yorkers and apartment

3 buildings and are there alternatives to this
4 proposal? I respectfully say it is not necessary and
5 there are alternatives. Although I respect the
6 intent of the proposition we need to look beyond it.
7 The vast majority of my portfolio consists of fire-
8 rated buildings. We've installed smoke and fire...

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 NEIL DAVIDOWITZ: We've installed smoke
11 and fire alarm systems, educated residents on fire
12 prevention, and have detailed safety and evacuation
13 protocols. In addition, we have also made or are
14 planning infrastructure improvements to ameliorate
15 the risk of fires, specifically upgrades to
16 electrical systems, both within the buildings and
17 apartments, have diminished the risk of fire.
18 Legislation eliminating smoking in common areas
19 coupled with co-ops and condominiums that are now
20 amending their governing documents to create
21 completely nonsmoking buildings will also diminish
22 the significant cause of structural fires. Let us
23 work together to continue to make our buildings safer
24 and reduce fatalities without adding overwhelming
25 financial and emotional burdens on our citizens.
Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, Mr. Davidowitz,
3 um, thank you for your testimony. Are there
4 recommendations that you have? With that many units,
5 um, are you hearing from tenants about safety, about
6 fire safety and, and those kinds of things, and if so
7 what are your recommendations? That's a, that's a
8 very large portfolio, so I'm wondering.

9 NEIL DAVIDOWITZ: Yes, Chairman,
10 [inaudible] hearing my suggestions, and I am hearing
11 from my client base all the time. As has been said
12 by many before me, you can't stress enough education.
13 We have actually, and you can't commend the Fire
14 Department of New York, and I can't commend them
15 enough. We have basically held in so many buildings,
16 they will come for free and we have had informational
17 meetings of unit owners and shareholders where the
18 FDNY has articulated details about safety in the
19 apartment, safety in buildings, establishing
20 protocols. Great education. We've initiated
21 inspection by building staff, whether it's handymen
22 or superintendents, that can access apartments the
23 ascertain if there are any visible dangerous
24 conditions. People, too many plugs in an outlet,
25 extension cords, over kitchens that are putting too

2 much, you know, there's too much amperage on a single
3 outlet. That kind of inspection will get you so,
4 will get tremendous amount of assistance. Upgrading,
5 we find that many fires may be electrical based.
6 Improving the electrical system in the building and
7 looking to improve [inaudible]. Um, those are some
8 recommendations that I have that I think can be done
9 without the kind of economic stress that this bill
10 would put on, both the dollars and possibly the
11 vacating of individuals from apartments.

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your
13 testimony, Mr. Davidowitz.

14 NEIL DAVIDOWITZ: Thank you, sir.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next we're gonna be
16 hearing from Richard Flateau, followed by Robert
17 Altman, followed by Joanna Wong.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

19 RICHARD FLATEAU: Ah, good afternoon,
20 council members and members of the public, um, Chair
21 Cornegy and Chair Borelli. Thank you for allowing me
22 to testify today regarding Intro 1146-B. My name is
23 Richard Flateau and I'm the chairperson of Community
24 Board 3, Brooklyn, which encompasses the neighborhood
25 of Bedford Stuyvesant, and has one of the highest

3 concentrations of late 19th and early 20th century
4 brownstone row houses in the city. Intro 1146-B,
5 requiring sprinkler systems for all residential
6 buildings more than 40 feet in height, would be quite
7 damaging to brownstoners in my community,
8 particularly those on fixed incomes. As such, as,
9 ah, with many others before me, I join the chorus in
10 opposition to this bill. Um, a Greek philosopher is
11 credited with the phrase primum non nocere, meaning
12 first do no harm. That is in the Hippocratic oath
13 that medical doctors take and which is incorporated
14 into their training and practice. The City Council
15 would be wise to follow that ancient advice. Ah,
16 unfortunately 1146-B violates that dictum in many
17 ways. I'll just, since time is so short, I'll just
18 mention, um, the exorbitant cost and the disruption.
19 Um, in terms of cost for typical property owners in
20 my community, ah, the numbers I'm hearing is \$50,000
21 to \$100,000 for a typical four-story row house, which
22 would be subject to that, ah, bill. Um, and with the
23 disruption both tenants and landlords, 'cause many
24 landlords live in those small buildings, would be
25 displaced, ah, due to the construction. I'm just

2 gonna offer a few, um, recommendations. One would be
3 to explore increasing...

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 RICHARD FLATEAU: Increasing the minimum
6 height from 40 to 60 feet. Um, a second would be to
7 consider, um, incentives, financial incentives,
8 including, ah, income tax credits, property tax
9 abatements, and loan and grant programs. Um, and,
10 ah, since time's expired I'll just mention the last
11 one. Ah, the council should work with the federal US
12 Fire Administration to figure out ways to bring down
13 the cost of retrofitted sprinkler systems for
14 residential buildings.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you so
16 much, Mr. Flateau...

17 RICHARD FLATEAU: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: ...the chair of,
19 ah, Community Board 3, my community board, um, and I,
20 I have no idea how you would possibly weave in Greek
21 philosophy in this instance, but you found a way to
22 do that. So for that you should be given credit
23 alone. Thank you.

24 RICHARD FLATEAU: Thank you.
25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon,
3 everyone, I'm Josh Kingsley, counsel to the Fire
4 Committee. I'll be taking over for this portion of
5 the hearing. Um, up next we will be hearing
6 testimony from Robert Altman, followed by Joanna
7 Wong. Mr. Altman, you can go ahead.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now. Mr.
9 Altman, you're on mute.

10 ROBERT ALTMAN: Am I off mute now?

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You're good now.

12 ROBERT ALTMAN: Thank you. Um, you have
13 my written comments. I don't feel a need to go
14 further on those, ah, right now. However, there was
15 some recommendations that came in from membership
16 after I submitted the testimony, so I did want to
17 include them. Ah, first, group R3 buildings should
18 be exempt from the proposal, any of the proposals,
19 and that consists of one- and two-family homes. Um,
20 there are already particular provisions that will
21 take care of the fire safety in those buildings that
22 are sufficient. Um, so we feel, believe, no matter
23 what those one- and two-family homes should be
24 excluded. Second, I would urge some caution on
25 everybody saying, well, when they retrofit, ah, when

3 you renovate the kitchen that you, if you can tap
4 into a domestic water line, um, this still is a
5 tremendous expense and I will tell you flat out right
6 now, if you want to talk about safety, there are a
7 number of people who will do a kitchen renovation
8 without a permit. That's probably just about equal
9 to because it's so under the radar that, um, that I
10 estimate that a high percentage, ah, do not in fact
11 go file for a permit. And I generally don't think
12 DOB is out there, ah, ticketing these one, two, you
13 know, home, family homes, or if in it's a co-op or
14 such. A lot of this work gets done without a permit.
15 And for those who do use the permit, by forcing them
16 to put in that sprinkler system and taking on the
17 additional cost they may say the hell with it and in
18 fact decide not to go get a permit. And so what you
19 have in there is that there are particular things,
20 such as gas hookups and such, which probably should
21 get, ah, done with a permit and should in fact be
22 inspected.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 ROBERT ALTMAN: That, ah, you want those
24 to actually get reviewed because that's where you're
25 gonna have most of your problems with fire.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your
3 testimony, Mr. Altman. So I, I noticed that, ah,
4 your professional expertise extends past just being
5 an attorney. Would you explain the other portion of
6 your expertise?

7 ROBERT ALTMAN: My expertise goes past
8 being attorney?

9 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK, as Robert
10 Altman Esq., PLLC.

11 ROBERT ALTMAN: Right, ah, I'm an
12 attorney and PLLC is the professional limited
13 liability company, so that discusses, um, what my,
14 um, ah, that's the corporate name of the law
15 practice.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I, I just want to
17 make sure that I'm giving you total credit for not
18 only your, ah, opinion, but based in some, some level
19 of expertise.

20 ROBERT ALTMAN: I'm only in fact, ah,
21 commenting on what my membership has told me.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK, all right.
23 Well, thank you for representing your membership and
24 doing a good job at it. Thank you for your
25 testimony.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you,
3 everyone...

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Oh, oh, wait, and
5 Mr. Altman, you said that your testimony, um, ah, had
6 been submitted, though, right? OK. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
8 Cornegy. Next we will hear testimony from Joanna
9 Wong, followed by Jules Feinman and the HDFC
10 Coalition.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

12 JOANNA WONG: Thank you everyone here for
13 taking the time today to let me share my concerns
14 with Intro 1146-B, the sprinkler bill. My family
15 operates a pre-war walk-up building in lower
16 Manhattan. Building safety is our number one
17 concern. Inside the building on a daily basis
18 includes myself, my loved ones, residential and
19 commercial tenants who we've known for decades, our
20 own staff, and vendors. No one cares more about
21 safety than, inside the building than my family and
22 me. But in the 40 years of, 40-plusyrs of operating
23 the building Intro 1146-B would be the most intrusive
24 and most disruptive thing we would be asking to live
25 and work through. The entire building, from the

3 basement to the roof, every floor, every room, in
4 every apartment would turn into a construction zone
5 for several years. Not only would it turn into a
6 construction zone, but it would be a construction
7 zone in which residents would have to live through.
8 If anyone has ever had a simple leak in his or her
9 apartment then you have a taste of how disruptive it
10 can be as a resident. You need to move your schedule
11 around to give access to the plumber. Your furniture
12 and belongings had to be moved, assuming there was
13 somewhere to move it to. Walls, floors, ceilings had
14 to be opened up. No matter how hard you try to
15 isolate and mitigate, dust travels. After the
16 plumbing work is done then the contractor has to come
17 in to sheetrock, patch, and paint. Reimagine that
18 same experience. Multiply that by a hundred.
19 Instead of working on one small area, imagine the
20 scope of work requiring water lines being installed
21 throughout the entire apartment, throughout the
22 entire building. Virtually every wall, floor, and
23 ceiling in the, throughout the entire building, would
24 have to be opened up and then restored. This is what
25 Intro 1146-B is asking all New Yorkers, New Yorker
residents to endure. As someone who deals with

2 residents on a daily basis and as the person who
3 would be responsible for implementing this, I believe
4 this proposal is the wrong solution. I don't want an
5 extension of time. I don't want financing.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 JOANNA WONG: I plead with all to
8 terminate this bill and explore less intrusive, less
9 disruptive, less expensive fire prevention options.
10 Um, I would like to end by asking the FDNY a question
11 for their opinion, 'cause I truly just don't know the
12 answer, but I wanted to know what their thoughts are
13 on, um, fire safety blankets and if they think that
14 is an effective tool to preventing, um, fires.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Joanna, I don't
16 know if we still have the, ah, FDNY with us. But,
17 um, I will try to field that question and, um, get
18 back to you with it. I think they're no longer here.
19 That's actually a great question and I'd like to know
20 the answer as well.

21 JOANNA WONG: OK, thank you, and then
22 also, um, I've been trying to get a meeting with you,
23 too, also, ah, Chair Cornegy, so I will [inaudible]
24 follow-up [inaudible] taking this opportunity to
25 [inaudible].

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: My staff, my staff
3 is on this call so we'll make that happen.

4 JOANNA WONG: OK, thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ah, thank you. Next
7 we will have Jules Feinman, Feinman, apologies,
8 followed by the HDFC Coalition.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 JULES FEINMAN: Ah, yes, thank you very
11 much. I, I am a member of the HDFC Coalition, but I
12 am speaking as a board member of a small HDFC on the,
13 ah, border of the Upper East Side and East Harlem.
14 Ah, we actually have sprinklers. Um, but I agree
15 with the HDFC Coalition's stance that of the
16 thousands of HDFC buildings and, and I believe ten
17 thousands of tenants, they can't afford this, OK?
18 And especially I'm staring at this report here that
19 says, ah, there are fines of up to \$10,000 a day. I
20 don't know about this issue with this, with the
21 kitchen upgrades, but I highly recommend the, ah,
22 education aspect and I would urge you to speak with
23 the Fire Department and possibly come up, especially
24 during these times of COVID when you can't do face-
25 to-face training, that maybe we can have some very

2 simple but, simple, quick, and well-produced videos
3 that, ah, you know, can be distributed all across the
4 city through YouTube or wherever, ah, saying this is
5 how you deal with a fire in your apartment. First of
6 all, you don't overload your, your apartment with
7 extension cords. Ah, don't smoke, don't put
8 cigarettes in bed, don't leave the door open if there
9 is a fire, get a kitchen fire extinguisher and learn
10 how to use it. Um, all these things can be taught,
11 ah, very quickly and very easily right now. And I,
12 ah, thank you for your attention to this, and thank
13 you for the time to speak.

14 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you for
15 your testimony. Ah, Joanna, I'm sorry, your last
16 name isn't showing upon the screen. Could you just
17 give it to me, please?

18 JULES FEINMAN: I'm sorry, were you
19 speaking with me?

20 JOANNA WONG: Yeah, no.

21 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Jules, I was saying
22 thank you so much for your testimony. I was actually
23 speaking with Joanna, I'm sorry.

24 JULES FEINMAN: OK, sorry. I'll leave.
25

2 JOANNA WONG: Yeah, sorry about that. I
3 couldn't figure out how to change it. Um, last name
4 is Wong, W-O-N-G.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK. Email address
6 real quick, or you don't want to share that publicly?

7 JOANNA WONG: I will email you [laughs],
8 Councilman.

9 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, thank
10 you, OK. Sorry for ah, ah, taking this whole hearing
11 in a different direction, Committee Counsel, sorry.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No worries, sir. Um,
13 up next we will have HDFC Coalition, and I believe
14 the individual who is logged on with that, if you
15 could identify yourself by name, um, that would be
16 appreciated. Thank you.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 JOHN MCBRIDE: Thank you. My name is
19 John McBride. I'm with the policy committee of the
20 HDFC Coalition and thank you for having us. Um, I'd
21 like to speak today briefly on two bills. Um, the
22 first one I'd like to speak about, because I have a
23 shorter comment, is bill 842-2018, which is described
24 as the luminous egress path markings. I must be
25 frank, I haven't had time to really review the bill,

3 but if I'm correct this is to extend the sort of
4 glow-in-the dark markings taped onto the floor in
5 public hallways, etcetera, to indicate egress, am I
6 correct, does any? I'll assume I'm correct, um, and
7 just keep talking and finish this quickly. Um, so I,
8 I just want to point out that for owners of
9 multifamily buildings, which, which co-ops are, um,
10 having to maintain these on the floor, ah, without
11 them getting, you know, ripped off from constant
12 mopping and people walking on, in the hallways,
13 etcetera, is going to be a real struggle, and let
14 alone the cost of doing it initially, and HPD will
15 seek to, ah, or perhaps [inaudible], I'm not sure,
16 will seek to issue fines for these, and these fines
17 will cause problems for the buildings. So I think it
18 would be helpful if this is something that the
19 council is interested in doing to find out if we
20 could perhaps, um, put those markings on the
21 baseboards sideways instead of directly on the floor
22 so they would be less likely to be ripped off the
23 floors and then the building would be less likely to
24 be fined. I'd now like to speak about bill 1146-B.
25 Um, I'd like to point out that there are over 1300
HDFC co-ops in New York City housing over 30,000

3 apartments which, um, which, and the apartments
4 themselves house approximately 90,000 to 100,000, um,
5 New Yorkers. HDFC shareholders are proud homeowners
6 of modest means. HDFC co-ops were created within
7 buildings that were in such poor physical shape that
8 they were abandoned by slum lords in the 1970s and
9 '80s.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 JOHN MCBRIDE: The average age of HDFC
12 buildings is probably 100 years old. We are still
13 struggling to repair these buildings due to neglect
14 from decades ago. I have just a very, couple more
15 comments. We are now faced with new expense
16 requirements, such as Local Law 11, or FISP, which is
17 Façade Inspection Safety Program. I was informed by
18 an architect this week that simply filing the
19 paperwork to comply costs \$6000, just for filing.
20 And we are getting phone calls and emails from HDFC
21 boards that cannot afford to pay the DOB fines and
22 don't know what to do. So the problem in, in
23 general, this is a problem that expands other
24 requirements that the city seems to come up with from
25 time to time. HDFCs are affordable housing. If
HDFCs don't comply with the law because they can't

3 afford to, the city will then say that the HDFC is
4 neglecting to keep the building safe and perhaps fine
5 it and put it on a track to be taken over by the
6 city. If the HDFC accepts government aid, that aid
7 is usually funneled through HPD, which is now
8 requiring HDFCs to essentially sign over control of
9 the co-op through extremely onerous new regulatory
10 agreements. So if we don't comply we end up with
11 fines leading to eventual foreclosure. If we do
12 accept help HPD requires us to, in many ways, give up
13 control of our homes. Neither scenario is, is
14 accessible. So those are my comments. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Mr. McBride, thank
16 you and, um, it is always a pleasure to work with
17 HDFC Coalition. Um, do you have any recommendations
18 on behalf of the coalition at this time?

19 JOHN MCBRIDE: Well, I do want to say
20 the, this is no joke. Fire safety is a real issue,
21 and I understand why the council is looking at this.
22 I just think that this is just trying to throw a
23 sledgehammer at, at a very delicate situation. This
24 would bankrupt, ah, buildings that are not affordable
25 housing. So think, think of what it would do to
affordable housing. And I think it's a fascinating

3 issue. I think the city should look at. I think we
4 should do studies, and I think we should find out if
5 there is something else that we can do, maybe with a
6 different, a totally different technology or
7 technologies that would really help save lives
8 without threatening the actual viability of these,
9 of, of housing. And I think one of the issues that
10 has been brought up by some of the other, um,
11 commenters or people testifying is how do you do this
12 in the first place, let alone the money? If you're
13 knocking holes in people's walls and you're throwing
14 lead dust into their homes, if you're throwing
15 potential asbestos into their homes, how do you deal
16 with that? Who's gonna pay for that? And, and how,
17 where do these people go? Where are they gonna go?
18 And then the, these buildings themselves may not be
19 structurally strong enough to support a big water
20 tank on the roof to hold the water for the sprinkler
21 system. So it's a, this is a, it's really good to
22 focus on fire safety. Ah, HDFC, people in HDFCs
23 don't want to burn alive more than any, I mean, any
24 more or any less than anyone else. But if we can
25 find a way to do it that's easier and more affordable
and doesn't threaten the very housing we're trying to

3 preserve, I think that would be a really, ah,
4 laudable goal.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK. Thank, thank
6 you, Mr. McBride. Um, I'm being prompted to try to
7 move a little bit more quickly because we have a
8 whole host of people who would like to speak and who
9 have waited patiently.

10 JOHN MCBRIDE: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So, um, while I
12 want to intently listen to every recommendation, I'm
13 being prompted that we'll be here all night if I
14 continue in this way. So thank you all who waited
15 patiently. Um, I think one of the things, though,
16 Mr. McBride, you brought up that's, that's important,
17 is us looking at new technologies and the
18 implementation of new technologies to get us where we
19 need to be in terms of safety. Um, I'm gonna give my
20 daughter, my oldest daughter, full credit, who always
21 tells me, Daddy, you got to skate where the puck is
22 gonna be, right, so I think, and this, this may be
23 instance that we need to be looking at skating to
24 where the puck is actually going to be. So thank you
25 for bringing up the technology portion of this,
because we are moving leaps and bounds as it relates

2 to technology. In this committee alone we've heard,
3 um, hearings on drones, which you never heard,
4 thought we'd hear before.

5 JOHN MCBRIDE: Right.

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: In terms of safety
7 and safety mechanisms. So, um, that's something I
8 certainly would like to explore on behalf of the
9 committee and on behalf of these, this suit of bills.
10 Thank you [inaudible].

11 JOHN MCBRIDE: If, if I could just throw
12 a plug in. Ah, HDFCs are suffering under the FISP
13 fines, and so it's just something to think about for
14 another bill.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, thank
16 you, Mr. McBride.

17 JOHN MCBRIDE: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ah, thank you, Chair
19 Cornegy. Um, next we will hear from George
20 Bassolino, followed by April McIver.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 GEORGE BASSOLINO: Good afternoon. My
23 name is George Bassolino and I represent the Master
24 Plumbers Council. I'm here today to give testimony
25 on comments on Intro 2151. In 2016 we were

3 privileged to work with council staff to provide
4 technical expertise and help negotiate the final
5 bill. We're fully supportive of the council's
6 proposal to extend the deadlines for inspections.
7 The inspection process has gotten off to a slow
8 start, due in some part to some ambiguities in the
9 law and rule. I believe we would all agree that the
10 intent of this law is to provide the minimum
11 standards to safeguard the public. It would be
12 beneficial if the council would provide clarification
13 of these issues by making a few revisions be included
14 in this Intro. The inspection scope must be clear to
15 everyone involved in the process and the persons
16 conducting these inspections must possess the best
17 available qualifications. In our written testimony
18 we have proposed changes to five sections of the law.
19 I cannot fully discuss each change within my allotted
20 time. However, the Master Plumbers Council is always
21 available to provide further assistance if the
22 council deems it necessary. But we, I'd like to
23 briefly discuss the major issue that is affecting
24 compliance today. As of today the Department of
25 Buildings has determined that all tenant spaces are
exempt from inspection. When the bill was negotiated

3 with council staff the understanding was that only
4 residential tenant spaces would be exempt. The law
5 specifies that the inspection must start at the point
6 of entry of gas piping into the building, which is
7 referred to as the POE. If the people is located
8 inside of a tenant space the inspector will not have
9 access to it. In terms of gas safety the POE is
10 ground zero. Most of the hazards an inspector may
11 encounter will be found at this location. Both the
12 Harlem and the Second Avenue incidents could have
13 been identified and reported by a qualified person
14 conducting a periodic gas inspection. In order for
15 those conditions to have been reported the spaces
16 would first need to have been accessed. Waiving the
17 requirement to inspect the POE due to the presence of
18 a tenant space...

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 GEORGE BASSOLINO: ...a direct violation
20 of federal and state gas inspection requirements. If
21 a tenant space precludes an inspector from gaining
22 access to the point of entry the inspection will be
23 incomplete. Our committees have been working with
24 our industry affiliates on [inaudible] training since
25 2014. The research and studies conducted by our

3 industry partners since that time have provided the
4 scientific data that was used to create the Periodic
5 Gas Inspection Training Program and the inspection
6 protocols that exist today. Without addressing the
7 entire [inaudible] issues compliance will continue to
8 suffer and some inspections will not provide the
9 level of public safety that the creation of this law
10 has intended. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you,
12 George. Good to see you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
14 we'll be hearing from April McIver.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 APRIL MCIVER: Good evening, everybody.
17 Ah, can you hear me? Good, right. Ah, my name is
18 April McIver. I'm the executive director of the
19 Plumbing Foundation. Ah, it's a nonprofit
20 organization representing plumbing contractors,
21 engineers, supply houses, and manufacturers. I
22 concur with a lot of what Mr. Bassolino. I did
23 submit written testimony, which is much more
24 detailed, so please take a look at that when you do
25 get a chance. Generally, we are in support of
several bills on the agenda, including Intro 859 and

3 1746. But I want to use my time to focus on Intro
4 number 2151-A, which is extending the compliance date
5 for Local Law 152, specifically for the buildings in
6 Community Districts 1, 3, and 10. Um, you know, as,
7 as everyone here knows, you know, the law was
8 originally passed four years ago. It was supposed to
9 go into effect in 2019 and due to several delays the
10 bill didn't go into effect until the beginning of
11 this year. Um, so I just want to concur with the,
12 ah, you know, Commissioner La Rocca. We don't have
13 an objection to the extension of the bill, but we do
14 think that, ah, the council needs to, you know, weigh
15 the extension with the purpose behind the law and
16 make several considerations, including an application
17 for waiver, an amnesty program, or at least increase
18 the penalties or add additional penalties and a time
19 to cure, um, so that building owners do comply with
20 this law. It is a safety law. It's very important.
21 Um, so those are some of the changes. Like I said,
22 we have several recommendations with an eight-page
23 testimony so I'm not going to go into it, but again
24 the commercial tenant spaces, as Mr. Bassolino
25 mentioned, in the port of entry, those are changes,
ah, that we do recommend as well to be put in this

2 bill. We think this is a great opportunity to make,
3 you know, changes to a lot of what we have now seen
4 are flaws in Local Law 152 of 2016. Um, so thank you
5 for your time today and please reach out to me if you
6 have any questions about my written testimony.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next
9 we'll be hearing from...

10 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, thank you.
13 Next we'll be hearing from Arthur Goldstein and
14 then Daniel Himmelsbach.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 ARTHUR GOLDSTEIN: Um, I'll just, ah, I
17 represent the Master Plumbers Council. Ah, George
18 has a statement. He had four other points to make,
19 if you have time to, to hear them I'll yield the rest
20 of my time. Otherwise, we had submitted testimony.

21 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: No, Arthur, why
22 don't you just give us the four points?

23 ARTHUR GOLDSTEIN: Well, George is the
24 expert. He has it in front of him.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So you're yielding
3 your time to George? Go ahead, George.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: You're on mute.

6 GEORGE BASSOLINO: Thank you, everyone.

7 Ah, a couple of other points that we had were the
8 inspection entity. The law provides for a licensed
9 master plumber or their direct employee with five
10 years' experience to conduct these inspections. In
11 the past four to five years that we've created the
12 training program a licensed plumber with his license
13 alone is not qualified, in our belief, to conduct
14 these inspections. They should have the additional
15 seven-hour training that's required of their
16 employees to conduct these inspections. The
17 Department of Buildings has created a guest work
18 qualification. We believe that the employee should
19 have the guest work qualification. Why? It proves
20 the [inaudible] experience and it also proves that
21 the person has measured knowledge of gas piping
22 systems. Other than, pretty much our changes are
23 minor. One we would like to bring to the council's
24 attention which is very important is right now what's
25 gonna happen if you don't do an inspection,

3 reinforcement. The rule provides for a \$10,000
4 penalty but it doesn't force or mandate that the
5 inspection is every conducted. There is talk now
6 from some building owners, well, I'm just going to
7 pay the fine because it's cheaper than the
8 inspection. So we would respectfully request that
9 you consider that when you review this law. And
10 other than that, um, we just made changes in the
11 scope so that the scope would [inaudible] the
12 inspection process, which wasn't completed, ah,
13 during the time that this law was negotiated. That's
14 it, and thank you everyone for your comments and, and
15 your time.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So, both George and
17 Arthur, you know, in this, in this, ah, extension
18 period it does give us an opportunity to work on the
19 bill. There's no such thing as a perfect bill and
20 I've been around long enough to know that. But we do
21 have an extended period of time not only for, ah, for
22 the homeowners to be able to prepare themselves and
23 be educated properly, ah, but also for us to look
24 some of the, ah, the changes that you're proposing.
25 So I know that I'm willing to do that and I believe

2 that, ah, ah, Chair of Finance, Danny Dromm, is also
3 willing, too.

4 GEORGE BASSOLINO: Thank you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, it looks Arthur
6 has his hand up. You don't get any time back,
7 Arthur. What?

8 ARTHUR GOLDSTEIN: Just real quick. Time
9 is of the essence of the changes 'cause inspections
10 will still be [muted]

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: You just went on
12 mute again, Arthur, by accident I think. I didn't do
13 it, I swear.

14 ARTHUR GOLDSTEIN: [laughs] My, my quick
15 point is that time is of the essence because, ah,
16 these inspections can still be occurring and
17 therefore the, the changes that the Master Plumbers
18 Council and others apparently have agreed, ah, should
19 take place should be done sooner rather than later so
20 there's clear direction on how the inspection should
21 be done.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: OK, so, can, um,
23 can you just, ah, text me, Arthur, and we'll, we'll
24 set up some time.

25 ARTHUR GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yep.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
4 we have Eric Dillenberger, Chi Osse, and Fior Ortiz.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 ERIC DILLENBERGER: Hello, can you hear
7 me?

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes.

9 ERIC DILLENBERGER: Ah, my company has
10 been installing sprinkler systems for over 30 years
11 and a hundred percent of our buildings are fully
12 sprinklered. However, ah, every one of those systems
13 was installed prior to any occupancy. I oppose, ah,
14 1146-B, ah, because it's retroactive. The building
15 code evolves to make buildings progressively safer,
16 more livable, and more energy efficient. However,
17 relatively few of the changes were required to be
18 retroactive because of practicality and expense.
19 Most buildings are in some way noncompliant with the
20 current code. While every single building in New
21 York City could be mandated to be upgraded to the
22 most recent code, where would it stop? The timeline
23 allotted for the proposed bill is grossly
24 insufficient. I doubt there is an adequate supply of
25 licensed mechanical engineers to even design all the

3 systems required in the city, ah, in the time
4 budgeted. The expense of retrofitting sprinklers for
5 many buildings will only serve to drive them into
6 bankruptcy. A new sprinkler system will often
7 require a new water main, excavating the street,
8 and/or new water tanks, upgraded structural supports
9 to carry the tanks, pumps, and upgraded electrical
10 systems to power the pumps. Add installation inside
11 of occupied apartments, disruption to tenants' lives,
12 lead paint and abscess laws, and you're looking at a
13 financial and physical pandemonium. As a contractor
14 I, I can't underestimate the extent of this. Without
15 a mechanism for public financing and recovery of the
16 costs of compliance, this is a recipe for Regency
17 Extended Care Center disruption and physical
18 disruption. And I respectfully submit this may not
19 be the time for this bill. Um, with my remaining
20 time I'd like to answer, um, your Chairperson's
21 question, ah, that was asked a while ago about water
22 mains, if you'll allow me. Um, I can tell you that,
23 um, if the water main is over 2-1/2 inches in
24 diameter you are allowed to come off it to, ah,
25 branch off the supply of the sprinkler, but if it's
under and this is an important part...

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 ERIC DILLENBERGER: ...important part, ah,
4 you will need a separate water main to come in to
5 supplement and this is hugely disruptive, and there's
6 another, there was a question within Chairperson
7 Borelli's question and that is the 40-foot issue. Is
8 this 40 foot to the slab of the topmost floor? Or is
9 40 foot to the roof slab? Or is it 40 foot to the
10 power fit? It's gonna make a huge difference on the
11 count of how many buildings are included in this
12 thing. And there is no distinction made in any of
13 the bill for this, and the building department and
14 the fire department look at those things very
15 differently. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your
17 testimony. And I'm saying thank you in, in, ah, for
18 Chair Borelli as well.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
20 we have Chi Osse, followed by Fior Ortiz.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 CHI OSSE: Good afternoon, honorable
23 members of the council members in attendance,
24 Chairman Cornegy, Chairman Borelli, and my fellow
25 neighbors. My name is Chi Osse and I live in the

3 36th City Council District. As a concerned citizen,
4 activist, organizer, and homeowner I appreciate the
5 opportunity to speak to the City Council today and
6 city today. Local Law 152 and Intro 1146 can be
7 discussed together. Both the law and the bill were
8 created as predictive modules to prevent future
9 calamities. Public safety was the goal and the want,
10 something we all desire. However, both approaches
11 lack the nuances necessary to be effective. At
12 present both will financially burden small home and
13 commercial owners. The boiler inspection law and the
14 DOB's execution of the law lacks proper notice,
15 options being email, letters, social media awareness,
16 and legal notices. It does not protect owners from
17 unscrupulous contractors and could use an amendment
18 that provides subsidies. Intro 1146 is not
19 realistic. The costs associated could ruin some
20 owners, displace residents, and disrupt the health
21 security of everyone. Because of the ongoing
22 pandemic our neighbors are aggravated and fed up with
23 mandates that feel punitive. There are alternatives,
24 from extinguishers, detectors, and proper maintenance
25 of the fire hydrants. There are many reasons being
expressed to the committee today to amend Local Law

2 152 with an extension. But an extension without
3 [inaudible] proper notification channels and possible
4 subsidies only pauses the problems. There are many
5 reasons being given to the committee to halt Intro
6 1146. The best reason is the question why. Why
7 create chaos in the middle of a health crisis, when
8 all the data and statements from the experts, the
9 fire department, show death by fire has trended low
10 for 15 years. And there are secure and affordable
11 options. I'm calling on you all today to both amend
12 Local Law 152 with [inaudible] and kill Intro 1146
13 with impunity. At present over 1100 citizens have
14 advocated for the death of this bill, not including
15 the angry crowd on this Zoom. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Chi, for
17 your testimony and, um, I find your amendments, ah,
18 especially the tiered portion very interesting, so
19 we'll have a conversation about them.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next up we have Fior
21 Ortiz, followed by A. Gravery, followed by Andrew
22 Lasko.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 FIOR ORTIZ: Good afternoon. My name is
25 Fior Ortiz Joiner, president of the [inaudible] Black

2 Street Association in Brooklyn's Council District 36.

3 I'm in opposition of Intro 1146-B. I'm all for

4 safety, fire prevention, and life preservation. But

5 this bill will have long-term detrimental effects to

6 communities that are most in need, low-income black

7 and brown. My community is comprised of beautiful

8 brownstones, many of them on landmark blocks. Most

9 of these homes have been owned by the same black and

10 brown families for generations as well as long-time

11 homeowners. Chair Cornegy, with all due respect, I

12 would be deeply concerned and disappointed if you

13 were to support this bill, especially since you have

14 many elderly homeowners in your district who have

15 already been victims of [inaudible] and have lost or

16 been close to losing their homes due to liens and

17 other shady practices. This bill will make your

18 constituents even more vulnerable. I personally have

19 received emails and calls from my neighbors, who

20 think we are deliberately being targeted. Quite

21 frankly, we do not see this bill, how this bill will

22 benefit us in any way other than to ensure we can no

23 longer afford our homes. The benefactors will be

24 greedy developers who will have the means to buy our

25 homes once we cannot afford the sprinkler upgrades

2 and accumulate huge liens. From the outside looking
3 in, I am sure sprinklers in every building in New
4 York City sounds like a great idea. In the grand
5 scheme of things it will be a nightmare to the most
6 marginalized, indefensible communities. Many
7 homeowners are struggling to pay their mortgages and
8 property taxes and many renters are struggling to pay
9 their rent to the small landlords. It will cost tens
10 of thousands of dollars to retrofit our properties,
11 especially the buildings that are over 100 years old
12 with many original details. For many of us our homes
13 are the path to generational wealth. This bill will
14 jeopardize the financial future of many black and
15 brown families. If this bill passes it will be
16 financially devastating. Thank you all for your
17 time.

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Ms.
19 Ortiz, for your testimony, and, ah, as I've mentioned
20 on several of the social media platforms that I've
21 been challenged on this particular bill on, this is a
22 hearing which allows to hear your voice and the
23 voices of all stakeholders. We've heard from
24 engineers, architects, ah, the Fire Department, fire
25 safety folks, and that's what this is designed to do.

2 Um, so this is not a vote. There's no action being
3 taken today. This is a hearing, figuratively and
4 literally, to hear the voice of every single
5 stakeholder. Um, and I can assure you as a homeowner
6 of a brownstone in my district there is no way I
7 would, um, ah, vote for or push forward any bill that
8 would disproportionately negatively impact, um,
9 homeowners, small homeowners and affect our
10 affordable housing stock, ah, negatively. So you can
11 count on, um, me as your council member to, to make
12 sure that this bill in its current form, if it does
13 not meet the needs and/or disproportionately
14 negatively impacts, ah, our folks, is not gonna go
15 forward, so. But thank you so much for your
16 advocacy. Ah, you, both you and she and everyone
17 else who's on the call from my district. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
19 we have A. Gravery, followed by Javier Herrera.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 A. GRAVERY: Unmute. What? Hello, can
22 you hear me?

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes.

24 A. GRAVERY: Oh, thank you, OK. Um, let
25 me first start by telling you a little about myself.

3 I was born and raised in Bedford Stuyvesant. My
4 childhood has been on Chauncey Street while my
5 adulthood on Macon Street. I have lived through the
6 crack epidemic and the gentrification of my
7 neighborhood. I currently live in a four-story
8 family brownstone and this new sprinkler system law,
9 1146-B, seems expensive and rash to people like me,
10 and I have many questions. I value safety. However,
11 a brownstone is not the same type of building as a
12 tower. It seems like small homeowners are being held
13 to task over issues that don't relate. That terrible
14 fire that happened in the city at Trump Tower is just
15 that, it's a tragedy. For this council to now
16 require automatic sprinklers in buildings 40 feet and
17 above, which do not come close to being the size of a
18 tower, it seems unfair. Creating a blanket law that
19 would cover all residences and raise, um, and raise,
20 excuse me, that would cover all residences just
21 seems, ah, very punitive at this time right now.
22 There are better ways to address fire safety. I've
23 heard some with the educational videos. I am for
24 that. Um, I grew up here and my lived experience in
25 Brooklyn has been that it's rapidly gentrifying and
this law feels more like it's less about safety and

2 more about current homeowners being vulnerable to
3 being priced out of their homes. Um, I researched
4 the cost of retrofitting an old brownstone like mine
5 and the sprinkler system is gonna be super expensive,
6 anywhere from \$50,000 to \$100,000, including getting
7 a new standpipe, including getting, ah, access to a
8 new water main, and now other people have already
9 talked about how expensive it is. Um, also, families
10 will have to live in their home while the sprinkler
11 system is being installed. There are many elderly
12 people that are still part of this neighborhood who
13 have many health issues, including my dad, who's a
14 severe asthmatic, who lives with me. My neighbor is
15 an amputee. Where are they supposed to live while
16 this long renovation is under way? Is the city
17 paying for relocation? Ah, breaking open walls,
18 ceilings, doors, floors...

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 A. GRAVERY: ...[inaudible] dust. OK, um,
21 I would like to finally say I know that, ah,
22 Councilman Cornegy you said that this was a hearing,
23 but the language of the law says, and I quote, that
24 we have all the owners, the one-year interim report
25 shall contain an affidavit by the owner of the

3 building acknowledging that the sprinklers are
4 required to be installed by December 31, 2020. So
5 I'm confused. The language of the law is saying we
6 have to have some time of affidavit by 2020 of this
7 year, but you're saying we're at a hearing. So you
8 can please clarify? Thank you very much for everyone
9 who has spoken.

10 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So just so I can
11 clarify, thank you for your testimony, that, that
12 bill and all bills in committees across the council
13 have to come to a vote. There's no vote. So a bill
14 just doesn't get enacted. It has to be, um, voted on
15 and a majority will decide whether or not the bill,
16 or we could look at making amendments to the bill,
17 and I'm gonna talk to the bill's prime sponsor about,
18 ah, some necessary amendments. Ah, but the reason
19 that no matter what the bill says it hasn't been
20 voted on this today is not a vote, it's only a
21 hearing.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Chair Cornegy, I
23 want to, ah, briefly, ah, chime in for a second. I
24 shut my camera off, ah, for a little bit because my
25 laptop is dying and I just want the record to reflect
that. If I, if you lose me in the next, ah, five

2 minutes or so, ah, it's because my battery is dead
3 and I apologize to, to anyone.

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, no problem, ah,
5 Cochair. Um, I was actually in your absence holding
6 you down, I actually took credit for a few things
7 that you're responsible for in your absence.

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Well, and I, I
9 heard, I just didn't want to turn, turn it back on.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: OK, thank you. Um,
11 so next up we have Avi G., followed by Nikki Scheuer.
12 Um, Avi G., go ahead.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 AVI G: Good afternoon, Chair Cornegy.
15 Ah, this is not directly about fire, but it is about
16 affordable housing and I think that as chair, um, you
17 have to be made aware of, ah, what's happening. So
18 just very briefly, I was supposed to sign an
19 affordable housing lease on, ah, June of 2019, ah,
20 545 days ago. Um, these were all the documents I
21 gave, 350 documents proving my eligibility, and then
22 the response I got, Chair, was this one-page letter.
23 After already being approved and supposed to sign it,
24 I was told that I was coming to sign a lease, you're
25 rejected for inconsistent information. What happened

2 after that, Chair Cornegy, was 545 days of torture
3 and with the help of, ah, several public officials of
4 integrity, um, I was tentatively supposed to sign a
5 lease 545 days later on December 1, yesterday. Um, I
6 was approved by the marketing agent, who passed my
7 file to HPD for the final review. Now based on HPD's
8 previous representation usually that's just a formal
9 thing. Whatever the marketing agent says HPD
10 approves. My file was passed to HPD last Friday. So
11 for the past four days after 545 days of torture,
12 which included homeless shelters, hotels, these four
13 days HPD has not approved my application and is now
14 requiring more documents, more questions. How about
15 this income, how about this income, what about this,
16 what about this. Chair Cornegy, the council and this
17 administration...

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 AVI G: ...if I could just complete here.

20 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I, I want to ask
21 you, do you mind getting on a three-way call with me,
22 you, and HPD? Because we've had similar
23 conversations before and I, I don't think you're
24 getting the resolution that you need, and it's my
25 goal to, you know, I, I don't, it's hard to do

3 constituent services during a, ah, a hearing. But I
4 would like to, ah, to get the three of us together,
5 me, you, and HPD, so that we don't, so you don't feel
6 compelled to come on, ah, ah, the hearings to have a
7 discussion. And I don't want to be callous about
8 what your case is. And so I clearly can't handle it
9 right now during the course of the hearing. But I'd
10 like to. Would you be willing to do a three-person
11 conversation between me, you, and the commissioner at
12 HPD?

13 AVI G: Sure. Respectfully, there's
14 nothing I want, I would want more, and I don't want
15 to come on these hearings, but, you know, I've
16 reached out to you, your personal email. I haven't
17 heard back and, this is a 545 saga of torture that is
18 unnecessary and unmerited. So I, I would be so happy
19 to have that three-way call. How can we facilitate
20 that?

21 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I will call you
22 tomorrow. I have received your emails. Um, if you
23 could just shoot me one that has your phone number in
24 it I will call you tomorrow personally.

25 AVI G: Thank you for your compassion,
sir.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. Thank
3 you for your testimony, Avi.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
5 we have Nikki Scheuer.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Nikki, are you there?

8 NIKKI SCHEUER: OK. Ah, I have now sent
9 the same, ah, testimony to every council member. I
10 presume most of them have gotten it as I've gotten
11 your, for the most part, the automatic response.
12 Fortunately, ah, ah, Speaker Johnson and, ah,
13 Councilwoman, ah, ah, Rosenthal replied. But I can
14 send in my, ah, letter, ah, to testimony. So I would
15 like to say I thought I covered every point, ah,
16 representative or Councilman Borelli and [inaudible]
17 certainly added a measure of [inaudible] as did the,
18 ah, commissioner of the DOB to what, the incredibly,
19 um, impracticality of this, ah, Intro 1146-B. Ah, I
20 had no idea that this had been done, ah, in 2004 in
21 commercial buildings, of which there are only about a
22 thousand, versus 85,000 of the residential and, ah, I
23 had known that they might have to put, ah, you know,
24 added roof structure and a bigger water tank. I had
25 no idea or thought about having water coming from the

2 main. Do we have enough water pressure to even
3 consider it? Um, ah, I am a landlord and I also am a
4 homeowner of a co-op and, ah, as a personal homeowner
5 I could never afford to do what you're suggesting in
6 my apartment, let alone the incredible disruption.
7 I've lived in my apartment for over 50 years. It is
8 large and it would destroy it. It's a 1909
9 buildings. Ah, there's no dropped ceilings. Ah,
10 it's all concrete. It, it would be a disaster. We
11 are putting in, or we will be putting in, ah, piping
12 for, ah, sprinklers in every apartment we undertake
13 to do renovation in. And that's the best we can do.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 NIKKI SCHEUER: That's the best we can
16 do, I think that's the most practical thing is that
17 anything coming up where they're doing a gut
18 renovation, that would be the time for sprinklers to
19 be put in. Otherwise, what would you do with all
20 these poor souls? You kick them out of their
21 apartments? I mean, it doesn't make any sense. And
22 right now everybody's suffering financially as well
23 as, I only heard about this by a fluke yesterday.
24 Most people don't even know about this law. I just
25 think it's ill-conceived, not well thought out on the

2 practical basis, and my recommendation is you want to
3 put it in, fine, but do it on anything that has not,
4 is undergoing renovation of a large scale.

5 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, at the risk of
6 undue familiarity, thank you for your, your comments
7 and your testimony, Nikki.

8 NIKKI SCHEUER: You're welcome. Thank
9 you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, everyone.
11 This concludes the public testimony. If we have
12 inadvertently forgotten to call on someone to
13 testify, if that person could raise their hand using
14 the Zoom hand raise function we will try to hear from
15 you now. I will now turn it over to Chair Cornegy
16 to close the hearing.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you so
18 much, Committee Counsel. Um, I, I just want to say
19 that this is, ah, the epitome or an example of the
20 council's commitment to hearing from every
21 stakeholder on very critical and crucial bills. Um,
22 I think the amount of time that we spent listening
23 to, um, will shape the way, the form, you know, the
24 way this bill goes forward. Um, I myself, um, was
25 very alarmed to hear the expense in true numbers, ah,

3 what it is from engineers and from plumbers, and the
4 disproportionate impact it will have on small
5 homeowners as well as our affordable housing stock.
6 So I, I really listened intently, um, with the idea
7 of going back and, and, and collaborating with all of
8 the sponsors on all of the bills today to make sure
9 that we are, um, as was mentioned before, following
10 the Hippocratic oath, which is to do no harm, which
11 is the intention of this council. So thank you,
12 everyone, for your testimony. Thank you those for
13 whose, I, I see people on the Zoom who were here from
14 the beginning who stayed the entire time. Ah, thank
15 you for the bill sponsor. Um, and I'd like to have
16 my cochair, ah, close out, ah, the hearing as well.
17 Thank you, Chair Borelli, ah, for your input and for
18 your hard work.

19 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you, thank
20 you very much. I think, ah, Councilman Grodenchik
21 also wanted to, ah, to say some final thoughts.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Oh.

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Um, but just in, in
24 my last, ah, second before my computer dies, I, I do
25 want to say thank you to all that, that participated
and specifically on 1146, because I think it's

3 important we articulate why from a variety of
4 different angles this bill, ah, as it's currently
5 written, might not be the best, ah, number one, for
6 the residents, number two, for the landlords, and
7 number three, for sort of the broader community at
8 large. So I appreciate everyone, um, you know,
9 providing their perspective on why the problem might
10 be [inaudible], and I thank you all and wish you all
11 an enjoyable holiday season.

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: And, and, I will
13 give the final word to the bill's, ah, prime sponsor,
14 who took pretty much of a beating today, ah, but is
15 very resilient and, and, and smart and I'm sure
16 willing, ah, to have a conversation going forward,
17 ah, Barry Grodenchik.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Ah, thank
19 you, Chairman. Ah, I really, ah, I enjoyed listening
20 to everybody, um, and, you know, I've been raised by,
21 ah, great people, um, great mentors in public
22 service, ah, who taught me that you gotta listen.
23 And we've heard a lot today from, ah, many, many
24 interested parties, ah, some of whom I met with, ah,
25 before this hearing. Um, I've heard from people in
the district. Ah, I've heard from people all over.

2 So I will be having a discussion with the Chairman
3 and it's, it's obvious to me, um, and I think, ah, to
4 both chairs that this bill could not, at least one of
5 my bills 1146, ah, could not go forward as is
6 currently written. So I want to make sure, let you
7 know that, ah, I was here all day, I heard all the
8 testimony, and I take it to heart and, um, we never
9 want to do any harm. Ah, I grew up in public housing
10 in New York City. I understand how important it is
11 to, ah, our homes are, are our castles. That comes
12 down to us, whether it's public housing or the
13 fanciest home, um, in the fanciest neighborhood. Ah,
14 every home is important and we don't want to disrupt
15 people's lives. So I will be speaking to Chair
16 Cornegy about this and we will go forward from there.
17 And I thank you all again, um, for coming forward
18 today as we always do as a city, um, to hear each
19 other out and to make, ah, all legislation better.
20 So thank you. Thank you, Chairs, and, ah, happy
21 holidays.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Ah, thank you.
23 Happy holidays to everyone on this call and all your
24 families. Ah, this commences the hearing of Housing
25

1 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS JOINTLY
2 WITH FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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3 and Buildings, ah, scheduled for December 2. Thank
4 you so much. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 13, 2021