

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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August 21, 2013
Start: 2:00 p.m.
Recess:

HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Committee Rm, 14th Fl.

B E F O R E:
JAMES F. GENNARO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Elizabeth S. Crowley
G. Oliver Koppell
Brad S. Lander
Stephen T. Levin
Donovan Richards
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Okay, are we good?

3 We're all set? Okay. Let me know when. Okay.

4 Alright. Good afternoon. My name is Councilman

5 Jim Gennaro, Chair of the Committee on

6 Environmental Protection.

7 Today, the committee will vote on five

8 pieces of legislation: Intro 1061-A; Intro 1062-A,

9 which I'm the lead sponsor of; Intro 1082,

10 sponsored by Council Member Wills; Intro 1074,

11 sponsored by Council Member Richards; and Intro

12 218-A, sponsored by Council Member Koppell. This

13 package of bills will reduce emissions for vehicles

14 in New York City. On January 30, 2013, this

15 committee held an oversight hearing on the city's

16 Fleet Emissions Reduction Laws that were passed

17 back in 2005. Those are local laws 38, 39, 40, 41

18 and 42 of 2005. These laws pertain to reducing

19 emissions to various vehicle fleets within the

20 city, and they have significantly improved air

21 quality over all these years. It certainly makes

22 sense to go back from time to time and make updates

23 to these bills which is what today's legislation is

24 about. Going back to my statement in order to

25 build upon and continue these air quality

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2 improvements, this committee is voting on these
3 bills today which will increase the use of
4 biodiesel in city-owned vehicles and will require
5 city vehicles to retrofit their engines with the
6 best available emissions control technology.

7 These bills will also increase the
8 minimum average fuel economy of light-duty vehicles
9 purchased by the city, will require a calculation
10 and reporting of the use base fuel economy of
11 light-duty and medium-duty vehicles and will
12 prohibit the issuance of waivers by the
13 Commissioner of DEP for diesel powered vehicles
14 that are unable to adopt the best available
15 retrofit technology previously in previous versions
16 of these bills. We had the commissioner was given
17 the ability to write waivers but that was a
18 practice that went on too long. We thought it was
19 appropriate to put an end to that practice.

20 Finally, Intro 218-A will improve air
21 quality by creating a pilot project for city
22 ambulances that will reduce idling through the use
23 of an idle reduction technology that is verified by
24 the USEPA. That's the bill that's sponsored by
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2 Council Member Koppell. We're going to give him a
3 chance to talk about that in a moment.

4 Through these bills we will move closer
5 to achieving the goals set forth by Plan YC and
6 closer to realizing the economic and public health
7 benefits that are associated with them.

8 And before I call this for a vote, I
9 want to make an apology for the delay. We had some
10 paperwork that had to do with an environmental
11 assessment that is necessary for one of the bills
12 that we're voting on today, so I should state for
13 the record that along with the bills that we'll be
14 voting, we'll be voting on a Preconsidered Reso
15 which adopts the environmental assessment that was
16 put together for Intro 1061-A. And with that said,
17 I would like to give the prime sponsor of Intro
18 218-A, Council Member Koppell, an opportunity to
19 speak on this bill and also after that give an
20 opportunity for Council Member Richards to speak on
21 his bill. And with that said, I call upon Oliver
22 to make a statement on this bill. I thank him for
23 all the work he did on this, and he personally did
24 the research on this and brought it forward and
25 here we are today, and I'm grateful to Oliver for

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2 indicating this good work done, and with that I
3 recognize Council Member Koppell.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Thank you.

5 I'll be very brief. I'm speaking mainly to a
6 mention of my colleagues who will continue to serve
7 here after this year that they should watch this.

8 It's been a frustration for me for many years to
9 have seen these ambulances, you know, the city
10 ambulances don't get dispatched from garages. They
11 sit on street corners all over the city, about 300
12 ambulances, and they, generally speaking, run their
13 engines 24 hours a day creating emissions, and they
14 do that because they want to keep the vehicle cool
15 for the driver, they want to keep certain medicines
16 refrigerated because they have to be refrigerated
17 to be maintained, and so it's cooling for the
18 people in the summer and for the medicines all year
19 around and then heating for the people in the
20 winter, that is the attendants.

21 I've said that there must be a better
22 way than running these engines 24 hours a day.
23 I've toyed with a number of ideas. There are some
24 companies that have been working on different kinds
25 of technology. The fire department which runs the

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2 ambulances was against my program until someone in
3 the fire department came up with a similar idea and
4 he got an award for it. So then the commissioner
5 said, well, since someone got an award for the idea
6 I support your bill. So now we have the bill on
7 the agenda, and the reason I'm speaking is that I
8 want those who are continuing to monitor this and
9 mandate that at some point in the near future all
10 ambulances either have batteries in them that will
11 run the heating and cooling system or as a possible
12 alternative that I just want to put in people's
13 minds, they could be attached to an external power
14 source. We have power sources in street lamps all
15 over the city, and you could work a device that
16 could automatically detach when the ambulance has
17 to go. So that's another idea if the batteries
18 don't work. What they want to try is some sort of
19 battery in the car or in the van, maybe that will
20 work. If that doesn't work I commend the other to
21 your attention. So I'm delighted we're finally
22 doing this. I've been talking about this for years
23 and years. Mr. Chairman, I also would like to be
24 added as a cosponsor in those others of the bills
25 we're hearing today where I'm not yet a cosponsor.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you for and
3 duly noted. I would ask staff to put all of it
4 down as a cosponsor on the other bills and I hope
5 that the award that was given to that person in the
6 fire department was the Koppell award, which is
7 what it should be called.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: It's a city
9 program, Mr. Chairman, which rewards city employees
10 for coming up with good ideas, and this got the
11 award and Commissioner Kosano then had to admit
12 that maybe it was a good idea.

13 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yes, that was...
14 figured out a way to get to yes and that is great,
15 and thank you for your personal and, you know, long
16 term efforts, you know, to bring this bill forward.
17 It isn't always that way the way bills come forward
18 but I think you willed this bill into existence and
19 we're here today and happy to be passing it. And
20 with that, I call upon Council Member Richards to
21 say a few words about his good bill.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Well, thank
23 you, Chairman, and first I want to say it's an
24 honor. This will be my first bill that actually
25 passes through a committee so...

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2 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Good for you.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I want to give
4 Jim Gennaro an award for helping me progress. But
5 on a more serious note, Intro 1074 basically says
6 that it's going to require the next mayor to report
7 to the council and the speaker of the city council
8 on how they are dealing with this issue of
9 emissions, and whoever that will be I'm grateful
10 that we will have some checks and balances so we
11 will hold their feet a little bit more to the fire
12 to ensure that they're continuing to make sure we
13 deal with this issue. Now as a Council Member in
14 southeast Queens who has the airport in my
15 district, at least temporarily or I don't know how
16 the lines went now, but probably not in my
17 district, we're still going to have planes flying
18 over and we're dealing with some of the highest
19 asthma rates in this city and we're still reeling
20 from Hurricane Sandy and Lord knows what the air
21 quality is that we're still dealing with in the
22 Rockaways and in Roseville, so this bill is just a
23 common sense bill. I think we need to really take
24 this and meet this issue head on, and this is what
25 this bill does so I commend everyone who has

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2 cosponsored a bill and sponsored a bill here on
3 this issue, and this is going to surely lead to
4 better air quality in New York City, so may we
5 continue to fight this battle. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you, thank
7 you. And I think that's the first time in council
8 history that we had Council Member talking about
9 his bill who is being photographed by another
10 Council Member. And I've never had that honor
11 bestowed upon me. I can only hope that, you know,
12 that someday I occupy that orbit where people are
13 taking my picture. And I've been kind of remiscnt
14 [phonetic] in not naming all the members that are
15 here with us. A member of the committee, a great
16 member of the committee, and a resident
17 photographer is Council Member Lander and Council
18 Member Levin is still here. Levin is here, yeah,
19 yeah, yeah. And we have Council Member Crowley as
20 well. And of course Council Member Koppell who
21 spoke on his bill and a member of the committee,
22 and with that said I think we're just about ready
23 for a vote, Billy, and so we're going to couple
24 everything so it would be Intro 1061-A and the
25 accompanying resolution that approves the

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2 environmental assessment, Intro 1062-A, Intro 1082,
3 Intro 1074, and Intro 218-A. Those will all be
4 coupled. The Chair, of course, recommends a Yes
5 vote, and with that said I ask Billy to call the
6 roll.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
8 Committee Clerk, roll call vote, Committee on
9 Environmental Protection. Council Member Gennaro?

10 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yes.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Koppell?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Yes.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Crowley?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Lander?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levin?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye on all.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Richards?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of six in
22 the affirmative, zero on the negative and no
23 abstentions, all items have been adopted. Members,
24 please sign the committee reports. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you all very
much. Like the clerk said, please sign the
committee reports, and we'll see you all tomorrow.

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 08/26/2013

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