

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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April 1, 2015
Start: 10:12 a.m.
Recess: 12:32 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Rosie Mendez
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Karen Koslowitz
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Mark Levine
Antonio Reynoso
Helen K. Rosenthal
Ritchie J. Torres
Eric A. Ulrich

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

Patrick Whaley
Assistant Commissioner
External Affairs
NYC Department of Buildings

Gus Sirakis
Executive Director
Technical Affairs
NYC Department of Buildings

Edward Ferrier
Fire Prevention Deputy Chief
Fire Department of New York - FDNY

Mario Molino
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Veterinary and Pest Control Services
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Ava Mariska
Past Housekeeping Supervisor
Flatotel

Josh Gold
Political Director
Hotel Trades Council

Sal Cassano
Appearing for: Michelle Villagomez
New York City Legislative Director
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to
Animals - ASPCA

Dan Mulligan
Business Agent
Local 638 - Steamfitters Union

Allie Feldman
Director of NY Class

Mark Gibson
Veterinarian
Animal Kind Veterinary Hospital
Brooklyn, New York.

Paola Fichera
Heart of Chelsea Animal Hospital
Lower East Side Animal Hospital

David Dietz
Puppy Paradise, Brooklyn
And Designer of Pet Safety Products

Michael Glass
National Field Representative
America's Pet Registry, Inc.
Secretary for New York Pet Welfare Association

Boris Zexter
Puppy Paws NYC

Joseph Salvatore Powell
Richmond Valley Veterinary Practice

Lisa Esposito
Past President
Veterinary Medical Association NYC
Owner of Richmond Valley Veterinary Practice

Keith De Blasio
Pet Shop Owner

Allen Bregman
Veterinarian and President
Veterinary Medical Association NYC
Executive Board Member
New York State Veterinary Medical Society

Harsha Perera
New York Public Welfare Association

Kenneth Humphreys
Veterinarian
One Love Animal Hospital

Melissa Donaldson
Deputy Director
Mayor's Alliance for New York City's Animals

Scott Bellman
New York City Firefighter, Retired

Richard Madrid
Animal Practice Investor/Builder
Midtown Manhattan

2 [sound check]

3 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Good morning
4 everyone and thank you coming. My name is Jumaane
5 Williams. I'm the Chair of the Housing and
6 Buildings. I'm joined today by Council Members
7 Rodriguez and Cohen. First, we're here to discuss
8 two bills from my colleague Council Member Johnson.
9 The first Intro 145 would require animal service
10 facilities where animals are continuously sheltered
11 for a period of at least 24 hours to install
12 automatic sprinkler system. The second bill Intro
13 592 would generally preclude owners of hotels with
14 150 [coughs] with 150 units or more from converting
15 more than 20% of the floor space used for sleeping
16 accommodations for other uses. It would also create
17 a hotel conversion review board to review requests
18 for waivers from the requirements of this
19 legislation. We're also here to vote on Intro 433-A,
20 a bill by colleague, Council Member Cohen. This
21 legislation will enhance the safety of multiple
22 dwellings by requiring outlets in the public parts of
23 new multiple dwellings and all outlets replacing them
24 to be tamper resistant. Furthermore, owners of
25 existing dwellings will be required to install

2 protective caps or other obstructive devices in the
3 public parts of the multiple dwelling. At this time,
4 I'd like to ask Council Member Cohen to provide a
5 statement on the bill.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Good morning
7 Council Member Williams. First, I would like to
8 thank Chair Williams, as well as committee members
9 Mendez, Rodriguez, Koslowitz, Cornegy, Espinal,
10 Levin, Reynoso, Rosenthal, Torres and Ulrich for
11 taking up Intro 433-A before the committee and
12 recognizing the importance of this potentially life
13 saving legislation. A little background on the bill.
14 Everyday approximately seven children are treated in
15 hospital emergency rooms across the United States for
16 injuries caused by tampering with wall outlets.
17 Playing on their hands and knees, a child's curiosity
18 will draw them to outlets that are on their level,
19 and in which they will insert whatever, keys, pins,
20 paper clips--I went with a penny--or their wet little
21 fingers. And electric shock with a child's body
22 results in severe burns, injuries or even death.
23 While most parents ensure that their home is baby
24 proofed, by taking proactive measures to fortify
25 against an inquisitive child, the common areas of

2 their buildings are often left unprotected. These
3 death and injuries are completely avoidable. Intro
4 433-A balances all concerns by requiring tamper
5 resistant receptacles installed in any new
6 construction and caps covering outlets in existing
7 buildings. Both are cautious and cause--[coughs]
8 Both are being cost-conscious. This legislation
9 weighs the risk of just one curious child being
10 electrocuted with the severity that a single shock
11 can cause upon their small bodies against the
12 relatively low burden of installing these easy and
13 inexpensive devices placed upon the building owner.
14 It's a cheap fix to a gap in our current law, which
15 left apartments' common areas exposed and children's
16 safety at risk.

17 I just really want to take one second to
18 thank Shijuade Kadree and Jen Wilcox, the staff to
19 the Housing Committee for their hard work in getting
20 us to this point. And I would like to thank the
21 folks at the Department of Buildings for helping to
22 make this legislation better. So, thank you very
23 much.

24 [pause]

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. I'd
3 like to thank my staff for the work that they did to
4 assemble this hearing including Nick Smith, my
5 Executive Chief of staff; Jen Wilcox and Shijuade
6 Kadree. Counsel to the Committee, Guillermo Patino
7 and Jose Conde; Policy Analyst to the Committee; and
8 Sarah Gastelum, the Committee's Finance Analyst.
9 With that said, I'm going to call up representatives
10 from the Administration as our first panel, and I
11 would like to thank everyone that would like-- I
12 would like to remind everyone that hopes to testify
13 today to please fill out a card with the Sergeant-at-
14 Arms. First up, we have Patrick Whaley, Assistant
15 Commissioner with DOB; Gus Sirakis from DOB. Edward
16 Ferrier from FDNY, and Mario Molino from DOHM, and we
17 want to recognize former Fire Commissioner Salvatore
18 Cassano who with us today. Thank you very much.

19 [pause]

20 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Can you all please
21 raise your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the
22 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
23 your testimony before this committee, and to respond
24 honestly to council member questions?

25 PANEL MEMBERS: I do.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You may begin at
3 your leisure.

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: Good
5 morning, Chair Williams and members of the City
6 Council. My name is Patrick Whaley. I'm Assistant
7 Commissioner of External Affairs at the City's
8 Department of Buildings. I am joined by my colleague
9 Gus Sirakis, Executive Director of Technical Affairs.
10 Mr. Sirakis and I are joined by Fire Prevention
11 Deputy Chief Edward Ferrier of the FDNY, and Mario
12 Molino, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of
13 Veterinary and Pest Control Services at the
14 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. We are
15 pleased to be here this morning to offer testimony on
16 Introductory No. 145, which requires automatic fire
17 sprinkler systems in veterinary clinics and pet shops
18 where animals are sheltered for a period of at least
19 24 hours.

20 Automatic fire sprinkler systems are
21 proven technology to keep life and property safe in
22 the event of a fire. Requiring sprinklers in
23 veterinary clinics and pet shops where animals are
24 sheltered for a period of at least 24 hours will help
25 keep these animals safe in the event of a fire.

2 Should the City Council choose to amend the Building
3 Code in this fashion, we would like to share a couple
4 of proposed amendments to make this proposal more
5 effective. Any automatic sprinkler systems installed
6 pursuant to this legislation should include a water
7 flow device and valve tamper switch connected to a
8 central station to allow for notification to the FDNY
9 in response. Furthermore, smoke detectors should
10 also be required with the central station monitoring.
11 We also suggest that the effective date and date of
12 retroactive compliance be extended beyond what is
13 called formal legislation to allow for a reasonable
14 amount of time for these facilities to install
15 sprinklers. It should also be noted that sprinkler
16 systems require a backflow preventer to protect the
17 City's water supply. Pursuant to the rules
18 established by the Department of Environmental
19 Protection, backflow prevention devices require
20 annual certification.

21 Finally, it is worth noting that there
22 are costs associated with installing sprinklers,
23 particularly in existing structures. The Department
24 does not install sprinkler systems, and so we do not
25 have a thorough understanding of what these costs

2 are. I understand there may be people testifying
3 this morning who have a better understanding of the
4 cost. I thank you for your attention, and the
5 opportunity to testify before you today. Mr.
6 Sirakis, Chief Ferrier, and Mr. Molino and I welcome
7 any questions that you might have.

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Are you giving any
9 additional testimony?

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: That's
11 all. I'm here for questions.

12 [pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: The smoke
14 detectors with central station monitoring that's just
15 the detectors go back some place, let someone know
16 that it went off, is that correct?

17 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: That's
18 correct. Yeah, it would be the--this would be early-
19 -early notification of an issues.

20 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I understand you
21 don't have that much information, but do you--do you
22 know the difference in cost by any chance?

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: I, you
24 know, I couldn't speculate. I mean we've--we were
25 discussing it around the office and some people were-

2 -were throwing around a number of, you know, very
3 small--a small facility with like under 20 sprinkler
4 heads in the tens or thousands of dollars, maybe 20
5 thousand dollars or something along those lines.

6 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I mean do you know
7 the difference between just a smoke detector and one
8 that has sensors? Is that what--is that what you
9 were answering?

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: No, we
11 were--we only looked at it from the total. I don't
12 have--just the smoke detection portion.

13 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Is there any place
14 in the city that requires the central station
15 monitoring?

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: Yes, we
17 were actually looking at this similar to what the
18 section is modeled after, group ambulatory
19 facilities, healthcare facilities where this is
20 patients that are under some kind of doctor care and
21 they have similar requirements. But this is just a
22 similar notification requirement that we have in the
23 code in Chapter 9.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: How often is FDNY
3 required to inspect Group B Occupancy Facilities for
4 fire sprinklers and associated components?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FERRIER: Hi, good
6 morning. There are two different ways that we may
7 inspect a Group B--Group B Occupancy. Either it will
8 be done by the field units or regular or BIS
9 inspection, which is our risk-based inspection
10 procedure. Or, it maybe inspected every five years
11 by our Bureau of Fire Prevention with the hydrostatic
12 tests.

13 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And is DOB doing
14 any inspection?

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: Yes, the
16 Department does. So after securing the permit to
17 perform the installation of the sprinkler system, the
18 contract with either request that the Buildings
19 Department come out to perform an inspection of that
20 sprinkler system or the contractor could self-certify
21 with the Department after performing the test on the
22 sprinkler system that the system is working properly.

23 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I'm sorry. You
24 said that the owner could self-certify?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: The
3 contractor who performed the work, the installation
4 work on the system.

5 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: How long after
6 self-certification is someone from the Department
7 checking?

8 GUS SIRAKIS: If the contractor is self-
9 certifying, we would not go back unless there is some
10 sort of additional work proposed under some--an
11 additional application.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I'm sorry. From
13 the Fire Department, just repeat again how often you
14 go? I'm just trying to see how often someone from
15 the Fire Department or the Department of Buildings
16 would check someone's self-certification.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FERRIER: Well, just
18 to reiterate, the Bureau of Fire Prevention will go
19 every five years to perform a hydrostatic test, which
20 is a water pressure test of the Fire Department
21 connection and the system itself. Which would be
22 performed by a licensed contractor. So that's every
23 five years, and of the units that are out in the
24 fields, you know, the fire trucks and the fire
25 engines they'll go by and they'll inspect them on a

2 regular basis based upon-- We have entered into a
3 new risk-based inspection program. In the past we
4 have done inspections on a five-year cyclical
5 process. And we've modified that, and we felt that a
6 risk-based process is much more effective. So the
7 more dangerous a building is, the more inspections it
8 will get. So if there are violations of fires or
9 other risk-based, you know, items that fall through
10 algorithm, they will go back there more often. But
11 if it has a good record, and there's been no
12 problems, we might not get to it for a while. So in
13 essence, you're not penalized, and you're not being
14 inspected if you have a really good building.

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do we--have we had
16 any issues with the self-certification?

17 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: Not that
18 I'm aware of.

19 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: What kind of
20 maintenance is needed for the fire sprinkler system,
21 and can you just walk through a typical safety
22 inspection?

23 [pause]

24 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: I can say
25 with regards to installation, the Buildings

2 Department performs their inspection and it's a
3 hydrostatic pressure test where they have to see that
4 the sprinkler heads are being operated for an hour
5 with at least 200 pounds of pressure hitting each of
6 the heads. That's the test that the department
7 performs to make sure the sprinkler system is
8 function properly.

9 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And sergeant and
10 you get something.

11 [pause, background noise]

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FERRIER: I'm handing
13 out information that's currently used by the Bureau
14 of Fire Prevention when it does its inspection of
15 actually an owner. The owner is responsible for
16 complying with NFPA 25, which specifies the
17 maintenance and inspection and the maintenance and
18 the testing for a sprinkler system. The owner like I
19 said is responsible, but what he'll do is he'll hire
20 someone with typical fitness [sic] or a licensed
21 plumber to perform the work. I guess that's just a--
22 that came from the NFPA 25. That's a breakdown of
23 what is inspected, and the--the length of time to do
24 the inspection, perform the inspection is going to be
25 based upon the type of installation, how extensive it

2 is and how many people are actually doing the
3 inspection.

4 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Can you just
5 restate where the inspection--you said and what kind
6 of inspection is it?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FERRIER: NFPA 25 is
8 the National Fire Protection Association. It's the
9 industry standard that's used by the sprinkler
10 industry, and nationally for our sprinkler
11 installations. What's happened is that they've
12 directed--they've formulated NFPA 25, which specifies
13 how to maintain, how to inspect, test and maintain a
14 sprinkler system. So those items that I gave you
15 were extracted from that document.

16 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thank
17 you very much for your testimony. I very much
18 appreciate it.

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER WHALEY: Thank
20 you, Council Member. Thank you.

21 [pause]

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: So we're going to
23 make a switch now, and have--since there's only one
24 panel here for Intro 592, we're going to have that
25 panel heard now. And then we're going to go back to

2 the folks that want to testify on Intro 145. So I'm
3 going to call up Rich Marco from ATC. Ava Mariska
4 and Josh Gold to give their testimony on Intro 592.

5 [pause]

6 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And I will put
7 three minutes on the--three minutes on the clock for
8 each person that would like to testify.

9 [pause]

10 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Can you each raise
11 your right hand, please. Do you affirm to tell the
12 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
13 your testimony before this committee, and to respond
14 honest--honestly to council member questions?

15 PANEL MEMBERS: [off mic] I do.

16 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. You
17 can start in your order of preference.

18 [pause]

19 AVA MARISKA: My name is Ava Mariska. I
20 live with my family in College Point, Queens. It was
21 important for me to take this opportunity to give
22 testimony here today, and to share my story with the
23 members of the committee. So I know how important
24 this bill is to hard working New Yorkers. For 14
25 years, I work as a Floor Supervisor in the

2 Housekeeping Department at Flotel Hotel at 135 West
3 52nd Street, Manhattan. My job was not easy. I was
4 on my feet and moving all day, but because I was a
5 member of the New York Hotel--New York Hotel Trade
6 Council, I had one of the best hotel jobs you could
7 find anywhere. I was paid good middle-class wages.
8 I had excellent employer funded healthcare. I had a
9 steady schedule, and I was treated with respect and
10 dignity. I was even able to take vacation every
11 year. Unfortunately, two years ago, all changed--
12 that all changed. In February 2013, my co-workers
13 and I found out that Flatotel was being closed and
14 turned in to condominiums. There were about 100 of
15 us working at the hotel, and we lost our job as a
16 result. I was devastated. For the last two years,
17 I've been trying hard to find a new job. I've had a
18 few temporary positions, but I have yet to find a
19 full-time steady employment. It's certainly not for
20 lack of trying. Even though I work at Flatotel for
21 many years, I was by no means ready to retire. I
22 have two sons, 19 and 25. At this point of their
23 lives I wish my children would be thinking about
24 their own careers and starting their own families and
25 not worrying about their parents. But now, my

2 husband and I are beginning to process selling our
3 home; leaving New York to find a less expensive place
4 to live. It makes me sad to think about it because
5 New York is our home. I appreciate the chance to be
6 heard here today. I always believe New York to be
7 the place where hard-working men and women can come
8 and raise families and make a living. Even though I
9 already lost my job as the result of a condominium
10 conversion, I am here ready because I hope that it is
11 not too late to save the job for neighbors and for
12 the New Yorkers across the city. Thank you all for
13 your time.

14 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.

15 JOSH GOLD: Good morning. Thank you, Mr.
16 Chairman and members of the Committee for the
17 opportunity to testify about this bill. My name is
18 Josh Gold. I'm the Political Director of the Hotel
19 Trades Council. Wholesale conversions of hotels to
20 luxury resident contribute to middle-class job
21 losses. The longstanding trend and mass layoffs in
22 the hotel industry due to luxury residential
23 conversions, has resulted in the loss of middle-class
24 jobs in the service sector. At least 14 hotels in
25 New York have converted to condos since 2003 leading

2 to 1,800 lost jobs and more conversions are imminent.
3 As the price of a buildable square foot continues to
4 rise for developers seeking to build multi-million
5 dollar apartments, centrally located hotel properties
6 even those that are very profitable become
7 increasingly attractive to developers seeking to
8 develop high-end condos. While high-end condos even
9 ultra luxury high-end condos can sometimes add to the
10 fabric of the city's economy, and even grow its tax
11 base, neighborhoods consisting of solely massive
12 high-end condos that are often third or fourth homes
13 are simply investment vehicles rather than living
14 spaces become unattractive for job support ground
15 floor businesses, resulting job losses and in ghost
16 neighborhoods. Numerous areas like the London and
17 Jamaica. [sic] Property owners who rarely inhabit
18 their playfield apartments, are likely to contribute
19 much less to the local economy than hotel visitors
20 who stay in vastly smaller rooms.

21 According to a 2013 Study by CUNY and the
22 New York City Mayor's Office, the average hotel
23 hospitality worker in New York City makes 116% in
24 median income and base wages or over \$53,000 a year.
25 These are some of the highest paying service sector

2 jobs in the city. Due to the high degree of
3 unionization, most of these jobs provide free
4 healthcare and retirement benefits. Meanwhile,
5 middle-class jobs are disappearing in New York. New
6 York City lost 100,000 middle-income jobs in 2008,
7 which were replaced by jobs making less than \$35,000
8 per year. Poverty wage jobs are replacing middle-
9 class jobs in the service sector. The City Council
10 has long--has a long-term interested in protecting a
11 diverse economy that includes good paying service
12 sector jobs that allow workers to live in New York
13 especially--in New York City. Especially jobs that
14 are accessible to immigrants. The legislation before
15 you limits the developer's ability to convert more
16 than 20% of transient room space at large hotels
17 without getting approval from the new formed Hotel
18 Conversion Board. That appointed board can take into
19 account the totality of circumstances when making a
20 decision including the ability of property owners to
21 effectively continue to operate as a hotel. The
22 existence of a board strikes a fair balance, and
23 allows the City of New York to continue to protect
24 vibrant middle-class job providing businesses while
25 ensuring the pockets within New York City do not

2 become ghost towns where the world's wealthy store
3 money in seldom used but massively sized and
4 enormously expensive ultra high end luxury condos.

5 Thank you for your time. And our counsel is here to
6 provide information if you need any, but he's not
7 testifying.

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. We've
9 been joined by Council Member Johnson and Council
10 Member Mendez. How many hotels are currently in the
11 city and how many of them are at least 150 rooms?

12 JOSH GOLD: I don't have the exact
13 numbers of hotels that are over 150 rooms, but there
14 are approximately 400 currently in the city.

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: How many?

16 JOSH GOLD: 400.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay, you said
18 there are 400 in the city or 400 with 150 rooms?

19 JOSH GOLD: 400 in the city and I can get
20 the information about how many of them are more than
21 150 rooms.

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do you know how
23 many of the hotel employ union workers?

24 JOSH GOLD: About 68% of rooms in New
25 York are represented by union workers, but the

2 numbers we have track the amount of rooms percentage
3 rather than the hotel percentage.

4 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do you know how
5 many of those large hotels converted some portion of
6 the occupancy for another use?

7 JOSH GOLD: I know that a complete
8 conversion of 14 hotels has happened over the past
9 ten years. There have been smaller conversions
10 throughout the city, and I can get you the exact
11 figure and how many of those converted smaller
12 spaces.

13 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do you know do the
14 conversions do they happen because the hotels are
15 losing moving, or are they just seeing more money in
16 condo conversions?

17 JOSH GOLD: I think you'd have to ask the
18 individual hotel owners, but we believe that in some
19 cases it may be because they're not making the amount
20 of revenue they'd like to make. And in some cases,
21 it would be because the amount of money available
22 through the conversion process is greater than what
23 they could make through a hotel.

24 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: So we've--and I've
25 seen just a growth of little hotels in neighborhoods

2 across the city in some places where they don't
3 belong. Is there any connection between what you're
4 trying to do here, and those pop-up hotels that are
5 happening?

6 JOSH GOLD: Yeah, I think that the
7 connection that we see is that the rooms that are
8 being lost are in full-service hotels primarily in
9 Midtown Manhattan, but across Manhattan. And the
10 rooms that are being gained in the city are in small
11 budget hotels. Unfortunately, located in industrial
12 manufacturing zones that provide low wage or minimum
13 wage jobs, and much less jobs per room than the
14 hotels that are being converted in areas that are
15 more attractive to luxury developers.

16 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: But what are you--
17 what is it you're suggesting the hotel is actually
18 losing money. Which is are they not able to obtain
19 the current business?

20 JOSH GOLD: The legislation Intro 592 has
21 a board that's appointed by the Mayor. The board is
22 required to make a decision that takes into account
23 situations like the one you're mentioning. And even
24 in situations where they're making money, but it's
25 not--You know, if they're making \$3.00 a year I don't

2 think that would satisfy certain levels of investors.
3 So if they're unable to successfully operate as a
4 hotel, or there are other circumstances that require
5 them to convert, maybe they need to re-invest the
6 money to make the hotel portion more enticing to
7 future clients. The board exists exactly for that
8 reason. And the board is required to make decisions
9 rather quickly in the legislation itself.

10 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I'm going to call
11 on Council Member Johnson whose bill it is. If you
12 he would like to make a statement just on this one,
13 and he can make a statement when we go back to the
14 other one, and if you have any questions.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair
16 Williams. Good morning. I apologize that I'm late.
17 I was chairing the Health Committee hearing across
18 the street. I had to run back during this hearing.
19 I essentially want to make an opening statement on
20 this Introduction 592, which seeks to preserve good
21 middle-class jobs in the hotel industry. Jobs that
22 are falling by the wayside as luxury hotels convert
23 their units into high-end condominiums. It will
24 accomplish this by stemming the tide of widespread
25 hotel conversions while allowing owners to appeal to

2 a review board if they seek any sort of exemption
3 from the law. There is evidence that the trend to
4 convert hotels into high-end luxury residential units
5 in New York City is set to accelerate soon. There
6 have been recent reports that four full-services
7 union hotel properties through its Carlton Battery
8 Park City, to the W Downtown, the Helmsley Park Lane,
9 and the Waldorf Astoria will likely go through
10 substantial condominium conversions. While some of
11 the immediate plans are currently calling for a
12 partial conversion, full conversion of all four
13 properties would result in the loss of 1,852 union
14 jobs doubling the amount of jobs lost to conversions
15 since 2003. Hotel conversions have lost the city
16 over 1,000 jobs to this practice in the last decade.
17 And this trend is in dire risk of accelerating. This
18 is not mere speculation. The new owner of the
19 Waldorf Astoria has flatly claimed that a large
20 portion of the hotel will be converted into luxury
21 apartments. Right now, the Waldorf has 1,235 rooms,
22 and employs over 1,250 union members. If even one-
23 quarter of these rooms are converted, we are talking
24 about hundreds of jobs lost. The Ritz-Carlton
25 Battery Park City may convert completely into high-

2 end condominiums, which would take away 298 hotel
3 rooms and over 250 union jobs with it. These jobs
4 are jobs that we should fight to preserve. They are
5 union jobs that pay a decent wage while bolstering
6 our tourism industry. Allowing our hotels to go the
7 way of condo will have serious consequences on income
8 disparity in the city. Luxury hotel jobs have served
9 our--have served our citizens a pathway from poverty
10 into the middle-class. We will only reverse that
11 trajectory. If we allow conversions to continue will
12 accelerate at this rate. The hotel jobs offered at
13 small and boutique hotels are poverty wage jobs plain
14 and simple. According to the Partnership for New
15 York, New York City lost over 100,000 middle-income
16 jobs since 2008, which were replaced by jobs that
17 paid less than \$35,000 a year. We need to make
18 certain that middle-class jobs like those in
19 hospitality are retained. There also exists an
20 economic need to continue to have business travelers
21 and tourists stay in areas where non-primary
22 residents super luxury condos investment vehicles are
23 squeezing out other uses. Our hotels are the
24 backbone of our flourishing tourism industry. Which
25 is critical not only to the city's bottom line, but

2 the countless restaurants, small businesses, vendors,
3 and other occupants that these hotels work with.

4 So, I want to thank you, Mr. Chair for
5 hearing this today. I look forward to working with
6 the Administration, with the union, with the
7 businesses, hotel owners to ensure that this bill
8 maintains and retains good middle-class union jobs in
9 New York City and I'll turn it back to you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you, Council
11 Member Johnson. Did you have any questions that you
12 wanted to ask.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I'm okay for
14 now.

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.
16 And, also I learned that one of our counsel Guillermo
17 Patino, your bill that was signed into law yesterday
18 was his first that was written. So I wanted to give
19 him a shout out--Guillermo. Where are you? Oh,
20 he's in the next room. He's not even here. I've got
21 to give him another shout out when he comes back.
22 All right. Well, congratulations. Okay. Thank
23 you. So it seems that condos in particular seem to
24 be what people are wanting to try to get as much
25 money as humanly possible. We see that problem I

2 think with the 428-A programs. There's been some tax
3 exemptions that have gone to luxury condos instead of
4 rentals. I think it's government that has a very big
5 place in the land that we have, and the things that
6 we provide to the city to make sure that everyone has
7 access to an ability to make a living. And so, I
8 think this bill fits right in with that to make sure
9 that we're doing things appropriately, and not just
10 chasing every single dollar. Or else the city wants
11 to buy it. So thank you, Council Member Johnson, for
12 this bill. Thank you for the work that you're doing,
13 and ma'am, thank you very much for sharing your
14 story, and coming forward even though hopefully this
15 bill passes. And when this bill passes, it won't help
16 your situation, but it may be able to help other
17 people from joining your situation. So I really
18 appreciate you coming out today. Thank you very
19 much.

20 AVA MARISKA: Thank you for listening.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Someone and I
22 forgot who it was, gave me a statement. I do have
23 some opposition, but I don't know if you wanted to
24 put this position into the record. And so, if you're
25

2 still here, please let me know so we can bring it
3 into the record for you. Thank you very much.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you.

5 [pause]

6 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: All right. Well,
7 we have testimony for the record. So apparently that
8 public statement I gave you was from anonymous. It's
9 supposed to be for the record, and the Deputy Mayor
10 for Housing and Economic Development also has a
11 statement for the record. Guillermo. Oh, Guillermo,
12 we gave you a shout out for your first bill that was
13 signed into law years. So we're going to give you.
14 [applause] We're going to go back to-- [off mic]
15 What intro was that? Intro 145, which is also
16 Council Member Johnson's bill, if he'd like to give
17 an opening statement. Right after that, we'll have
18 an Honorable Sal Cassano, Dan Mulligan; Chelsey Shant
19 [sic], and Joyce Freeman who will come up and give
20 testimony. At some point when we have six council
21 embers here, we're going to stop wherever we are to
22 have vote on the previously discussed intro.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you again,
24 Chair Williams for being so generous in hearing two
25 of my bills today. I really, really appreciate it.

2 Introduction 145 is almost two decades overdue, and
3 represents common sense regulation that will save the
4 lives of animals here in New York City. [coughs] We
5 have seen too many incidents in which animals lost
6 their lives simply because the most basic safeguards
7 were not mandated at shops where they wound up.
8 Moreover, first responders put themselves at
9 considerable risk in order to save these animals.
10 Both the pets and the brave men and women who saved
11 them will be much safer when this bill is enacted.
12 According to the National Fire Protection
13 Association, establishments with fire sprinklers are
14 one-half to three-fourths less likely to experience
15 serious damages when compared against those without
16 sprinklers. With concern for safety for our animals,
17 those who care for them and our first responders this
18 bill intends to expand the installation of fire
19 sprinklers to all places that allow animals on their
20 premises such as professional offices and public
21 service buildings.

22 Those who are opposed to this simple and
23 human measure will likely cite the cost that it poses
24 to business. In truth, the overhead costs are a
25 small price to pay in comparison to the scores of

2 animals that will lose their lives in the absence of
3 such legislation in the years to come. Having this
4 basic system in place to protect the residents of an
5 establishment human or animal must be the cost of
6 doing business in our city. Multiple fires over the
7 years that, as this bill have languished, have
8 claimed the lives of hundreds of animals. 200 pets
9 alone perished in a single fire in Inwood in 2002,
10 130 firefighters responded to the scene at Bob's
11 Tropical Pet Store in Woodlawn in 2006 that claimed
12 the lives of 12 tropical birds. In 2008, 100 pets in
13 Morrisania in the Bronx died trapped in their cages,
14 and the fire above a veterinary clinic on the Upper
15 West Side last April almost claimed the lives of 15
16 other pets. This is not an isolated incident. These
17 animals are unable to rescue themselves, and must be
18 afforded this protection for their safety. And this
19 legislation will also protect the men and women who
20 have to respond to incidents when they occur. Thank
21 you, Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. We
23 also had testimony for the record on 592 from REBNY.
24 We are waiting on one person from the Legislative
25 Office to call the vote. If my colleagues can just

2 hold on for five minutes, I think he's on the way,
3 and we will get that vote done. We've been joined by
4 Council Members Levine, Espinal, Rosenthal, and
5 Cornegy, and I would like to call up Honorable Sal
6 Cassano, Don Mulligan, Allie Feldman, Joyce
7 Friedman. Keep in mind that Keep in mind as soon as
8 that staff person comes, we're going to have to cut
9 you short so we can take a vote. So council members
10 can leave. Thank you.

11 [pause, background comments]

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Can you each raise
13 your right hand, please? Do you affirm to tell the
14 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
15 your testimony before this committee, and to respond
16 honestly to council member questions?

17 SAL CASSANO: I do.

18 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You each have
19 three minutes--three minutes to give your testimony
20 and you can start at your leisure and in the order
21 you prefer.

22 SAL CASSANO: Good.

23 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.

24 SAL CASSANO: Good morning, Chairman.

25 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Good morning.

2 SAL CASSANO: I'm here to read a statement
3 by Michelle Villagomez the New York City Legislative
4 Director for the American Society for the Prevention
5 of Cruelty to Animals or the ASPCA. I would like to
6 thank the Housing and Buildings Committee and
7 Chairman Williams for the opportunity to speak in
8 support of Intro 145, which will require the
9 installation of automatic sprinklers throughout all
10 group occupancies that provides services for animals
11 if animals are continuously sheltered for at least 24
12 hours. Fires in business where animals are confined
13 can have tragic consequences for both the animals and
14 for first responders. These types of businesses can
15 be particularly vulnerable to fire because housing
16 animals may require the use of many electrical
17 outlets and appliances such as heat lamps in
18 proximity to flammable materials like shredded
19 newspapers or saw dust, which is often used for
20 bedding or cage lining.

21 Sadly, fires in animal facilities in and
22 around New York City are not uncommon. Animals in
23 cages have no means of escape and even those that are
24 not caged can quickly succumb to smoke inhalation or
25 become trapped by flames before help can arrive. New

2 Yorkers may remember the pet store fire that took
3 place in Astoria, Queens on Memorial Day 2010. Five
4 firefighters were taken to local hospitals. One
5 suffered second degree burns, and the other sustained
6 minor injuries. These responders were able to save
7 some animals, but many of the small pets perished.
8 In August 2006, a massive Queens pet shop fire
9 tragically resulted in the death of near 200 animals.
10 A similar fire in 2004 killed over 1,000 animals in a
11 Long Island pet store, and in 2002, a Manhattan blaze
12 took the lives over 200 animals. Firefighters who
13 arrive on such premises to fight fires are in
14 jeopardy along with employees, customers and other
15 members of the public who may be in close proximity
16 to the fire.

17 This is especially true in closed
18 quarters typically of our New York City
19 neighborhoods. The simplest and most effective fire
20 prevention and reduction measure is the installation
21 and maintenance of sprinkler systems. Fire sprinkler
22 systems offer the optimum level of fire safety
23 because they immediately control the fire in the room
24 or origin and help prevent flashover, and often
25 extinguish the first before the fire department

2 arrives on the scene. According to the National Fire
3 Protection Association, the chances of dying in a
4 fire where sprinklers are present is reduced by one-
5 half to three-fourths compared to where sprinklers
6 are not present. In addition, the average property
7 loss is cut by one-half to two-thirds. In addition
8 to the clear humane objectives and responsibility we
9 have in protecting these animals' lives, it is
10 important that the public health and safety is
11 preserved by making all attempts to minimize the
12 occurrence of fires and facilities that provide
13 services for animals, which often times they join
14 other buildings. This is why we urge the Council to
15 pass Intro 145, which could save thousands of animals
16 and humans from horrible injuries and deaths arising
17 out of fires occurring in pet stores and other
18 locations in which animals are housed. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. Before
20 you begin, just one--

21 [pause]

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay. We're going
23 to hold for one second so we can have a vote. The
24 vote is on Intro 433, which we discussed earlier. We
25 had a hearing previously in this session about

2 requiring outlets and tamper-resistant protective
3 caps and other obstructive devices on parts of
4 multiple dwellings where you have electricity coming
5 out. It was a very good hearing, and I think it's a
6 very good bill. I'm going to ask all of my
7 colleagues to vote aye, and I'd like to call the
8 vote.

9 CLERK: Kevin Paine [sp?], Committee
10 Clerk. Roll call in the Committee on Housing and
11 Buildings, Intro 433-A. Council Member Williams.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye.

13 CLERK: Mendez.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye.

15 CLERK: Cornegy.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I vote aye.

17 CLERK: Espinal.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Aye.

19 CLERK: Levine.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Aye.

21 CLERK: Rosenthal.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [off mic]

23 Aye.

24

25

2 CLERK: By a vote of 6 in the
3 affirmative, 0 in the negative, and no abstentions,
4 the item has been adopted.

5 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. We'll
6 keep the roll open until we finish the hearing so my
7 colleagues have an opportunity to come and vote.
8 Thank you very much. You can continue with your
9 testimony.

10 DAN MULLIGAN: Good morning. Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair, and City Council Members. My name is Dan
12 Mulligan. I'm the Business Agent for Local 638,
13 Steamfitters Union. On behalf of Steamfitters Union
14 Local 638, we support the bill before you today.
15 Local 638 represents over 8,000 members who perform
16 steam fitting and fire protection work throughout New
17 York City and Long Island. As it's been practiced
18 in other commercial spaces, we believe extending the
19 requirement for sprinkler systems in veterinary
20 clinics and pet shops is key for the welfare of the
21 housed animals. In January of 1986, 45 horses died
22 in a tragic barn fire at Belmont Race Track. The
23 sprinkler system was poorly maintained. The
24 sprinkler pipe was frozen, which caused the pipes to
25 burst. Our members now work at Belmont Race Tack

2 where the--where we provide fire protection for all
3 of the horses, stables so this type of tragedy never
4 occurs again. It is important that sprinkler systems
5 are installed and maintained for the protection of
6 all animals. According to the National Fire
7 Protection Association, the chances of dying in a
8 fire where sprinklers are present is reduced by one-
9 half to three-fourths compared to where sprinklers
10 are now present. In addition, we would like to
11 commend the ASPCA in recognizing this need, and look
12 forward to implementing this legislation. To
13 reiterate, animals housed in our city's stables,
14 veterinary clinics, and shops do not have the means
15 of escaping on their own. Protecting our animals
16 from noxious fumes caused by fires is not only the
17 main objective, but also a matter of public health
18 and safety. We want to thank Council Member Corey
19 Johnson, James Vacca, and Elizabeth Crowley for
20 drafting this prudent piece of legislation, and a
21 number of City Council members who have signed on to
22 support the passage--its passage. In passing
23 Introduction 145, you will be saving thousands of
24 animals and humans from injury and death caused by
25 these horrific fires. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Before you start
3 the next testimony, I'm going to call Council Member
4 Torres to vote on Intro 433-A.

5 CLERK: Torres.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

7 CLERK: The vote stands at 7 in the
8 affirmative.

9 ALLIE FELDMAN: Hi. Good morning. My
10 name is Allie Feldman, the Director of NY Class. I
11 want to start by raising a paw to Councilman Corey
12 Johnson for his leadership on this issue. And also
13 raise a paw to Chairman Jumaane Williams for allowing
14 us the opportunity to testify on this today. On
15 behalf of our thousands of members across all five
16 New York City boroughs, we really that the City
17 Council has taken this issue on. This is something
18 advocates have fought for, for many, many years. I'm
19 sure you can imagine the terror of what it's like to
20 be an animal that's locked in a cage knowing that
21 there's absolutely no chance for you to escape or be
22 rescued when you don't have fire sprinklers. Because
23 there is simply no way for first responders to get to
24 your cage and let you out. Of course, we support the
25 mandatory installation fire sprinklers in

2 establishments that provide shelter for animals. And
3 sadly, fires in animal facilities and around NYC are
4 not uncommon. Animals in these cages have no means
5 of escape, and even those that are not caged can
6 quickly succumb to smoke inhalation or become trapped
7 by flames before help can arrive.

8 New Yorkers may remember one of the more
9 recently pet store fires in Astoria, Queens on
10 Memorial Day of 2010. Five firefighters were taken
11 to hospitals. One suffered second degree burns.
12 Another sustained minor injuries. These first
13 responders were able to save some animals, but many
14 smaller pets perished. In August of 2006, a massive
15 Queens pet shop fire tragically resulted in the death
16 of nearly 200 animals. A similar fire in 2004 killed
17 over 1,000 animals in a Long Island pet store. And
18 in 2002, a Manhattan blaze took the lives of more
19 than 200 animals. Fire poses and imminent threat to
20 both pet houses at commercial businesses and the
21 first responders who risk their lives to fight those
22 fires.

23 The simplest and most effective fire loss
24 prevention and reduction measure is the installation
25 and maintenance of fire sprinklers. Fire sprinkler

2 systems offer the optimum level of fire safety
3 because it can control a fire immediately in the room
4 or origin; help prevent flashover, and often
5 extinguish the fire before the department can arrive
6 on the scene. According to the National Fire
7 Protection Association, in fires with sprinklers
8 present the chances of dying in a fire are reduced by
9 one-half to three-fourths compared to fires--compared
10 to fires where sprinklers are not present. We
11 understand that certain landlords and business owners
12 may oppose installing fire sprinklers due to the
13 cost. To those people we say this: If you're not
14 willing to spend the money to provide basic, common
15 sense protection for the animals you're selling for a
16 profit, then you shouldn't be in this business of
17 working with animals in the first place. The last
18 thing New York City needs is more business profiting
19 off the exploitation of animals without protecting
20 them. Thank you for helping to create a more humane
21 NYC for all residents, two-legged and four-legged.

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. Hold
23 on one second, please. Council Member Reynoso,
24 Council Member Reynoso.

25 CLERK: Reynoso.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: We've been joined
3 by Council Member Reynoso who is going to vote on
4 Intro 433.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I apologize. I
6 vote aye.

7 CLERK: The vote is going to be 8 in the
8 affirmative.

9 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.

10 JOYCE FRIEDMAN: Good morning, Honorable
11 Chairperson Williams and members of the Committee on
12 Housing and Buildings. I'm Joyce Friedman, New York
13 City Coordinator for the Humane Society of the United
14 States, the nation's largest animal protection
15 organization with significant membership in New York
16 City. I appear before you today to express our
17 support for Intro 145. This legislation, which has
18 been under consideration since 1998 would require the
19 installation of sprinkler systems at city businesses
20 where animals are continuously housed for longer than
21 24 hours. This includes pet shops, veterinary
22 offices, animal hospitals, animal kennels and pet
23 grooming shops. There is strong incentive and reason
24 to pass this legislation. In 2008, over 100 animals
25 including cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs, parrots,

1 parakeets and reptiles were lost in a tragic fire at
2 Stephanie and Amanda's Pet Center a pet retailer
3 located in the Bronx. In 2006, a pet store fire in
4 Jamaica, Queens killed numerous animals while
5 neighbors attempted to rescue them. And 2002, a
6 four alarm fire in Inwood took the lives of more than
7 200 trapped animals. Future tragedies such as these
8 maybe prevented through effective legislation. New
9 York City has passed similar sprinkler requirement
10 bills designed to protect public safety including
11 Local Law No. 5 in 1973; Local Law 41 in 1978, and
12 Local Law 10 in '99 and Local Law 26 in 2004.
13 According to New York's Mechanical Contractors and
14 Steam Fitters Local 638, sprinklers along with
15 greater installation of smoke detectors have
16 contributed greatly to the decline of fire related
17 fatalities in New York City. Passage of Intro 145
18 would protect not only the lives and safety of
19 companion animals, but also significantly those of
20 our firefighters, first responders and goodwill
21 members of the public responding to such fires. We
22 respectfully urge the City Council to pass Intro No.
23 145. Thanks for this opportunity, and thank you to
24

2 Council Members Johnson, Vacca, and Crowley for
3 introducing the bill. Thanks.

4 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you for your
5 testimony, and I also thank Council Member Johnson
6 for his leadership on this. And contrary to popular
7 belief, we care for a lot of our animals here. So
8 we're very happy to provide this. I know roughly
9 about half of us are on some of your favorites lists
10 right about now. But we do very much have a concern
11 for our animals, and I'm proud to hear this bill, and
12 I'm proud that Council Member Johnson brought it to
13 my attention. So it's one that I'm hoping that we
14 can move forward making sure that we can work out
15 whatever issues there may be. But it must be a
16 horrible situation as someone pointed out to be
17 trapped and unable to maneuver. And as also
18 mentioned I think it provides a measure of safety for
19 our firefighters and all of those who will be there
20 as well. So thank you. Council Member Johnson.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you.
22 Thank you all for being here today, and for
23 testifying. I just think it's important to note for
24 the record when the former Fire Commissioner Sal
25 Cassano is channeling Michelle Villagomez from the

2 ASPCA that is a good day at the Council. I
3 appreciate you being here. Some of the fires that
4 you mentioned in the testimony that you read for
5 Michelle and some of the fires that I referenced, and
6 some of the other fires that were referenced, I
7 believe you were fire Commissioner at the time that
8 those fires happened. And I know that every fire, of
9 course, is different. But, some of the facts and
10 statistics that were read about when sprinklers are
11 on premises, and what that actually does to save
12 human lives and potentially the lives of animals.
13 Given your expertise as Commissioner of the FDNY for
14 many years, thank you for your service, could you
15 speak a little bit about what sprinklers actually
16 achieve when they're workable and up to date?

17 SAL CASSANO: Sure. Sprinklers are the
18 number one life saving factors at any fire, any place
19 that we can sprinkle. Fires are kept in the
20 incipient stage. The fire deaths in sprinklered
21 premises are almost nil throughout the country.
22 That's not only in New York City. The sooner we
23 sprinkle all buildings and every part the building
24 where there are occupants, the safer we'll be. And
25 this is not only here in New York, this is throughout

2 the country and throughout the world. When I visit
3 other countries, they're all sprinkling buildings.
4 It's something we should do, and we should be behind
5 this effort.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And I know
7 you're not here speaking for the FDNY. You're now
8 retired. You're here representing the ASPCA but how
9 often does it in your experience does the FDNY--how
10 often is the FDNY required to inspect Group B
11 occupancy facilities for fire sprinklers and
12 associated components.

13 SAL CASSANO: Well, as Chief Ferrier
14 mentioned, the sprinkler system we pressure test it
15 every five years just to make sure that it's still in
16 the same condition. And we went through a risk-based
17 inspection program, which was under my guidance and
18 inspect buildings depending on the risk that it
19 faces. If a building has had more fires, if it had
20 more violations, that will get it inspected more
21 frequently. The less fires, the less inspections,
22 and the less back taxes means that the building is up
23 to code. So that will give us less inspection. So
24 I'm going to say within a five-year period every
25 building gets inspected. If the building needs to be

2 inspected they get inspected twice in one year
3 depending on the building itself.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And I know--this
5 is the last question I have for you, Commissioner.
6 Every facility is, of course, a different size. Some
7 pet stores are very small. Some animal hospitals are
8 very large. Some kennels are small. Some kennels
9 are large. So I know there's not an easy way to
10 answer this, but the general cost associated with the
11 addition of a sprinkler system for-- What's the
12 range between a very small facilities, you know,
13 2,000 square feet, and a very large facility? Is it
14 a huge cost?

15 SAL CASSANO: It's--in the cost of saving
16 lives, it's minimal. In new construction, the cost
17 of a sprinkler system is very, very low because
18 everything is open, everything is exposed. The
19 piping is there. So, if it's new construction, it's
20 minimal. Naturally, if it's a refit, a retrofit,
21 it's going to cost you a little bit more. But again,
22 in the measuring of saving lives, there's no
23 comparison about how much you're going to spend, and
24 how much it's going to cost that person. Or the

2 person who's animal it was, or the person whose life
3 it was. It's really a no-brainer.

4 DAN MULLIGAN: I represent the Steam
5 Fitters Union, and our contractors do that
6 installing. I would say that's not easy to answer
7 given all the variables. But say on average say a
8 20-headed space it might cost about \$12 to \$15,000,
9 and that would depend on where the water source is
10 coming from. And, you know, some of the variables
11 within the space. But that's a pretty rough and
12 accurate estimate.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you very
14 much.

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. Is
16 that an estimate for retrofitting buildings that
17 would exist?

18 DAN MULLIGAN: [coughs] It would--yes,
19 that would be a building that could exist, but then
20 that--the variables within the space would maybe vary
21 that cost a bit. That's why I say between \$12 and
22 \$15,000 for a 20-head space.

23 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: The Administration
24 testified with just a couple of suggestions. One of
25 them was to have--also required smoke detectors

2 connected to a center station. Do you know anything
3 about the costs and differences in the type they're
4 asking for versus the most--what most people probably
5 have in their home?

6 SAL CASSANO: Well, that it will cost you
7 more because you have a service that has to be
8 provided. You know, with an electrical hookup, but
9 that does provide you with a quick response. As
10 Chief Ferrier has said, it gets you first responders
11 there quicker. Even as the sprinkler system is
12 activating, so that two things. People always worry
13 about water damage. The quicker we get there, the
14 quicker we shut the sprinkler system down, if need
15 be. So it's more of a cost, but it's also an
16 additional safety factor.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: No, not the cost
18 of the service, but the--is there a huge cost in
19 putting the hardware in additionally for the central
20 station?

21 DAN MULLIGAN: I can't speak to the
22 smoker detector portion of it.

23 SAL CASSANO: It's a matter of just
24 hooking up the system to an electrical supply and
25 getting a service to come in and hook up into it.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay.

3 SAL CASSANO: I don't really--I don't
4 know the cost of it.

5 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay. I don't
6 think my colleagues have any other--any further
7 questions. So thank you Commissioner, et al. for
8 providing your testimony today. And again, we love
9 animals. So thank you very much. We also have for
10 the record Hotel Associations of New York City in
11 opposition of Intro 592.

12 [pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Next, we have Dr.
14 Mark Gibson, Animal Kind Veterinary Hospital, Paola
15 Fichera. Sorry, I probably pronounced it wrong.
16 Hard Up Chelsea, and Lower East Side Animal
17 Hospitals. Michael Glass, I believe. New York Pet
18 Welfare Association; David Dietz, New York Pet
19 Welfare Association. And if you could please come
20 up.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: After this panel
22 is finished, we'll have Keith De Blasio, Boris--

23 [background comments]

24 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I will just stick
25 with Boris for now, Puppy Paws NYC, and you can help

2 us with your last name when you get here. Joseph
3 Salvatore, Peter Riono, American Veterinary Medical
4 Association; Lisa E. Esposito. They will be on deck
5 after this particular hearing. I'm just--I'm sorry.
6 This panel. So we have Dr. Mark Gibson, Paolo
7 Fichera, Michael Glass, and David Dietz , is that
8 correct?

9 [pause]

10 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Can you each
11 please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell
12 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
13 in your testimony before this committee, and to
14 respond honestly to council member questions?

15 PANEL MEMBER: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You can--you each
17 have three minutes for your testimony, and you can
18 start in order of preference.

19 MARK GIBSON: My name is Mark Gibson.
20 I'm a veterinarian of Animal Kind Veterinary Hospital
21 in Brooklyn, New York. I employ 55 people, and I
22 want to give a shout out to my representative Brad
23 Lander in that district, and Mathieu Eugene, who is
24 in the district of my home. I don't know if they are
25 here, but I'm disappointed that they're not.

2 [laughs] And I also want to give a special mention
3 to Stephen Levin, who I don't know if you saw him on
4 TV last night. He saved a cat. Did you see that.

5 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: He did. He
6 definitely did that. [sic]

7 MARK GIBSON: As pet lovers, the knee-
8 jerk reaction to this bill on first look is common
9 sense, but I would encourage you to give it a second
10 look. We all--I'm sure many of you have pets here,
11 and--and I would imagine that many of them are home
12 alone right now. No? Are you home sprinklered?
13 Well, I'm going to say that the animals in my animal
14 hospital who receive 24/7 hour care and supervision
15 are safer than my ones at home. If someone is there
16 in the hospital, if something happens, and it's--and
17 we have smoke alarms that are connected to a central
18 alarm--it's put out immediately. It would be put out
19 immediately, and those animals would be saved. So
20 that's--that's one of my arguments. I mean it's--I
21 mean you could go as far as to say, maybe you should
22 require sprinklers in all homes and all buildings
23 where animals are left alone. You know, which, of
24 course, is probably absurd, but it makes about as
25 much sense. Because I think they're--my own pets are

2 safer in my hospital than being left at home alone
3 today as they are now.

4 Secondly, we're different than pet stores
5 and, you know, the other thing, of course, it is the
6 expense, and who do you think is going to pay for it?
7 The clients are going to pay for it. The healthcare
8 for these animals is challenging enough, and anybody
9 who works in a veterinary hospital everyday has to
10 deal with people who cannot afford our fees as it is.
11 You know, and I--when I built my veterinary clinic, I
12 followed the laws. I got building permits. I put in
13 fire retardant materials. I've done multiple
14 renovations that have required permits since. The
15 Building Department has never expected me to do it.
16 The alternative of an alarm makes complete sense, and
17 I think that is a--that is a requirement that should
18 be--should be done. [bell] I guess I'm out of time.
19 Of course, I have much more to say. I don't know if
20 I'm allowed to say it.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Perhaps, if we
22 have some additional questions, you can respond.

23 MARK GIBSON: Okay, very good.

24 [pause]

25 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

2 PAOLO FICHERA: Thank you, members of the
3 City Council and Council Member Williams. My name is
4 Paolo Fichera [sp?], and yes you did pronounce it
5 right. So thank you very much. I'm here on behalf
6 of the Heart of Chelsea Animal Hospital on West 18th
7 Street in Chelsea and Lower East Side Animal Hospital
8 on Eldridge Street on the Lower East Side. Both of
9 the practices are owned and operated by Dr. Marc
10 Siebert who is a long-time Manhattan resident, and a
11 small business owner for the past 15 years. The
12 legislation proposed by the City Council to require
13 animal hospitals to install a sprinkler system, if
14 enacted would possibly put us and many other animal
15 hospitals in the city out of business. While this
16 proposal may be incredibly well-intentioned, placing
17 this financial and logistical hardship on veterinary
18 clinics in the city will have the absolute opposite
19 effect that it's intended for. Rather than save the
20 lives of animals in the cases of fire emergencies, it
21 will deprive the city's animal owners of the kind of
22 healthcare that saves the lives of animals 365 days a
23 year. Running a veterinary practice in New York City
24 is not something that we do to get wildly rich. For
25 most of us it's a passion that we've been lucky

2 enough to turn into a profession. At both of our
3 animals hospitals, we work really long hours. We pay
4 very hefty rents and business taxes, and we engage in
5 our neighborhood all because we are concerned for the
6 welfare of New York City's pets. None of us wants to
7 see animals injured, which is why we have an
8 evacuation protocols. We have fire alarm systems and
9 smoke and carbon monoxide detectors all of which are
10 linked to central notification systems. We have fire
11 extinguishers. We have on-call rotations, and we
12 have security cameras to ensure the safety of our
13 patients and our facilities. Do not mistake our
14 opposition to this legislation as indifference to the
15 tragedy of a fire emergency. When we renovated Heart
16 of Chelsea Animal Hospital in 2010, we actually
17 commissioned a plan to install a sprinkler system in
18 our hospital where our patients stay overnight. At
19 the time it wasn't code. It wasn't law. It was just
20 in our opinion common sense, as we've heard today.
21 It was done on our part to see if there was any other
22 way that we could protect our animals in the event of
23 a tragic fire. Because we are housed in a 100 plus
24 year old building, we are told--we were told we would
25 need to replace the existing water mains, add

2 additional water mains in order to handle the water
3 pressure, and install backflow valves. In short, to
4 ensure that no less than--[coughs] excuse me--to
5 ensure that less than one thousand square feet of the
6 building was fully protected, the bill was going to
7 be \$250,000. At the Lower East Side Hospital, we
8 have even more space that needs to be covered by
9 sprinklers. That would basically mean a \$500,000 hit
10 to our animal hospital, which would literally put us
11 out of business. Also, are we asking our landlords
12 to do this work for us? Are we asking for permission
13 from our landlords, which actually would be a
14 violation of our leases. Aren't there other measures
15 that actually would ensure the safety of our animals
16 in other sections, in other regulations that we could
17 follow apart from the sprinkler system that would
18 make sure that we're complying with the law. I beg
19 you to reconsider this legislation, and think about
20 more appropriate measures rather than putting us out
21 of business. Thank you.

22 DAVID DIETZ: Hi. Good morning. My name
23 is David Dietz. I'm from Puppy Paradise, Brooklyn,
24 New York but as others may not know, for the past 25
25 years--I've been in business for 40 years--for 25

2 years I've been a designer and builder of safety
3 products specifically for animals. So I'm well
4 versed in animal safety. I love animals. I've been
5 in the business for a long time. What I've made and
6 discovered is we build safety products for pets that
7 I design and manufacture in Asia. I live in Asia,
8 and during my course of travels to Asia I've seen
9 many factories, safety repellent devices for fire. I
10 didn't know it would come in useful and handy, but I
11 keep my options for opportunities open to see what
12 may come up. I have an answer for everybody that
13 will solve sprinkler systems because I don't--I think
14 90% of the people here in America don't know of
15 another way to suppress fires or put them out other
16 than by water. Here I have a--not a Halon, but a
17 chemical fire suppressant that hangs from each room.
18 It installs in 30 minutes. It's compliant with the
19 Fire Department and suppresses or puts out all fires
20 in about 15 minutes or less. It's easy to install,
21 and I think all stores--I don't know if you have it.
22 Fire suppressant bottles that you put out within your
23 store. You have some safety bottles that you go
24 around and keep in each room so that if there's a
25 fire you can physically put it out. But what about

2 at night when nobody is around. This is exactly the
3 same chemical use as a--and a safety product use that
4 you use in a store for pets and in homes. You
5 install it in less than 30 minutes. The cost is 80%
6 less than putting sprinkler systems in with the
7 licensed plumber. It can be inspected once a year,
8 and it has a 10-year life expectancy. The cost runs
9 about 26 cents a day to have something like this in,
10 in over a 10-year period. It can be easily replaced,
11 and it covers all the aspects of fire replacement. I
12 have a small crew in Asia that's working on all the
13 particulars, and to answer questions. And slowly but
14 surely I'm becoming more of an expert in fire
15 suppression systems. This is an alternative answer
16 if you allow other than water sprinkler systems to be
17 installed in properties. I didn't bring copies, but
18 you can have my copy of the technical aspects on the
19 safety. Because if it's used in an animal facility,
20 the worst that happens is some eye irritation, and
21 some breathing irritation. But the animals aren't
22 soaked. The animals aren't--the animals--you don't
23 have water damage. You don't have installation from
24 licensed plumbers. You don't have inspections every
25 year at a cost. You don't have the Department of

2 Buildings that you have to get blueprints to file for
3 a water system. This could be installed within seven
4 days in any place quickly and cheaply. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
6 much. Did you have something that you wanted to show
7 us or give to us?

8 [pause]

9 DAVID DIETZ: This would even include--so
10 you won't forget, I have a copper custom made
11 business card for you.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Sure.

13 DAVID DIETZ: That's designed for that as
14 well.

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.

16 MICHAEL GLASS: Thank you and thank you
17 for the opportunity to testify to day. I'm Michael
18 Glass. I'm a National Field Representative for
19 America's Pet Registry, Incorporated as well as the
20 secretary for the New York Pet Welfare Association to
21 which our goal is to educate the public and policy
22 makers about responsible pet ownership and
23 legislation. I'd like to bring up a couple points.
24 I've been cautioned to dive into the realm of the
25 finances of this. When you're--you can't put life in

2 safety or you can't put a number on life and safety.
3 And that's absolutely true. However, the dilemma is
4 when you have an issue that may cost a few dollars,
5 absolutely. When you go to the next step that you
6 are in the realm of a few thousand dollars,
7 absolutely. You enter into a gray area. However, I
8 must beg to differ with some of the testimony I heard
9 earlier with regards to the cost to implement a
10 system like this. We are getting close in the tens
11 of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of dollars.
12 In the interest of not treading on other people's
13 expertise, what I can say is what I am an expert at
14 is gathering that expert information and that expert
15 testimony. And that's what I implore the Committee
16 to consider. Please form a group. Revisit this.
17 Look at this. It's not as simple as a knee-jerk
18 reaction of installing fire extinguishers. I
19 apologize. Fire sprinklers. If you're going to look
20 at the NFPA as an expert, as a source, the subsequent
21 to this testimony, you're going to hear testimony
22 with regards to the NFPA 150, which is a complete
23 manual that addresses animal safety and animal
24 security and fire prevention. A few years ago that
25 committee was asked to look at the mandatory

2 installation--I apologize--the suggested installation
3 of fire extinguishers. That request was engaged by
4 the group. It was looked at by a committee, and it
5 was--I must say a quote here, "Failed that measure."
6 That group is willing to revisit that. The
7 discussions were such that--not that fire
8 extinguishers were bad, but it needed more
9 information it needed more data. I mean a knee-jerk
10 reaction to install fire sprinklers is not also
11 addressing the potential harm and the potential
12 hazard that it may cause. Also within my testimony
13 please notice that I added information from the
14 International Boarding and Pet Services Association.
15 But they also had concerns with this. While we all
16 are looking for the answer to this, right now the
17 expertise and the answers are fire sprinklers address
18 humans and human lives. We need to address that with
19 animals and animal safety. It's not as simple as a
20 sprinkler puts out a fire, and the animal is saved.
21 Thank you for your time.

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.

23 Council Member Rodriguez to vote on Intro 433-A.

24 CLERK: Rodriguez.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Wait. I'll let
3 you say it. [sic]

4 CLERK: Rodriguez.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

6 CLERK: The vote stands are 9 in the
7 affirmative.

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you each for
9 your testimony. I do have some questions. I'm going
10 to wait and defer to my colleague, whose bill is--he
11 is the proud sponsor.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair
13 Williams. Thank you all for being here today. I am
14 very grateful that the Heart of Chelsea is in my
15 District. I live three blocks from you all, and many
16 of my friends who live in the neighborhood use your
17 services [coughs] and have nothing but great things
18 to say. So thank you very much for being here. I
19 wanted to--I believe that you all, of course, are
20 here because you love animals, and that's what you do
21 for a living. And no one in anyway is trying to
22 invalidate that. My sense from hearing from the
23 former Fire Commissioner who just testified who has
24 been doing this work at the FDNY I believe for over
25 four decades until a few months ago, is that

2 sprinklers save lives. And I understand, of course,
3 that depending on the size of your facility that
4 there could be an enormous cost involved with this.
5 That's not the goal of this piece of legislation.
6 And I am open to figuring out sensible ways for
7 certain types of facilities to figure out how to make
8 it work. Because I don't want to lose veterinary
9 services of hospitals in the city. They're crucial
10 and they're important. My question though is that no
11 one wants fire to happen, and if a fire did happen,
12 you'd potentially be out of business anyway without
13 a--without a sprinkler system. I mean, we--the
14 statistics are real. They're not made up that
15 without sprinkler systems in buildings the--not just
16 the loss of the life, but the loss of property is
17 much more extensive without a sprinkler system. And
18 so I'm not saying--there may be a middle ground
19 between having a fire, and having a sprinkler system
20 for a hospital. I think for pet stores [coughs]
21 where there's not 24/7 coverage it's different.
22 Hospital you all have people there 24 hours a day.

23 MARK GIBSON: [off mic] [interposing]

24 Yes, I provide 24-hour--

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: You could just
3 turn the mic on, sir. [coughs]

4 MARK GIBSON: Yes, I provide 24-hour
5 service.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]
7 See, so I think that's a big difference. I mean if
8 you have--if you're staffed 24 hours a day, and there
9 is someone there--a human being there that can call
10 the Fire Department, they can call 911, that is able
11 to grab a fire extinguisher immediately. And use
12 different means to try to help put a fire out while
13 the Fire Department is on their way, I think that's
14 in some ways a different circumstance. But a pet
15 store does not have 24/7 coverage. Where you have
16 pets that are in their cages and their kennels,
17 there's no one there. [coughs] A fire happens and
18 it's until the Fire Department gets there nothings
19 happened. [coughs] So, I do think that there's a
20 significant difference there, and I don't think that
21 all of these facilities whether they be pet stores,
22 animal hospitals, kennels, veterinary clinics,
23 they're not all one and the same. Because the
24 staffing is different. The services are different.
25 So I'm open to working with the Chair and with you

2 all on figuring out how to do something that makes
3 sense. But one thing I would say is to use maybe a
4 bad analogy, I wouldn't pour water on the fact that
5 sprinklers work. Sprinklers work and let you said,
6 you said, Well, should we have sprinklers in all
7 apartment buildings? Yes. We should. They save
8 lives. Now, the cost is enormous for old buildings,
9 especially apartment buildings to retrofit. But if
10 money were not an object, of course we should have
11 sprinklers in all buildings. And your pets are home
12 alone and there could be a fire. I don't know how
13 many pets you have. Most people have, you know, one
14 or two or three or four. The issue here is when you
15 have many animals in one facility, and the potential
16 loss of life. In commercial buildings where you have
17 huge numbers of people, we were able to put in fire
18 safety protocol measures that were mandated to try to
19 safe lives. And so, I'm more than happy to work with
20 you all, and figure out a way to move forward, but we
21 know that sprinklers safe lives.

22 MARK GIBSON: I don't think--I can't--
23 would never argue that, and I--and I agree with you.
24 But I think that the percentage--when he gives
25 percentages of, you know, lives are saved through,

2 you know, with sprinklers and without, I don't think
3 he's talking about people who are home or animals
4 that were home. And I could be wrong, and my facts
5 may be totally wrong. But I thought that this fire
6 on the Upper West Side started in the apartment above
7 and not in the clinic. And so, you know, what is--
8 that sort of blows the whole--the whole thing. I
9 think they were damaged by steam and flooding.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Well, it doesn't
11 blow the whole thing up because if you are in a
12 building that if a pet store is in the ground floor
13 in a residential building in a commercial space. And
14 there is a significant cluster of animals, a high
15 number of animals that are in that space that don't
16 have the protection that they need, they're at risk.

17 MARK GIBSON: I want to add one other
18 thing about--although I only have two cats, some of
19 my clients have 20. [laughs]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: There are some
21 people. I would think that's a very small number of
22 people in New York City. I mean I'm sure there are
23 people that have a huge number of animals given our
24 city and the apartment size constraints that we face.
25 Most people have two dogs, maybe a cat, three cats.

2 That's the majority. There's a small percentage of
3 people who have a huge number of animals, but that is
4 a--it's probably an infinitesimal amount of the
5 population.

6 MARK GIBSON: One other thing I'll say
7 and I'll take one moment. I do think the off-the-
8 cuff estimates that the other people have testified
9 are not based on fact, you know, and that's one of
10 the things I wanted to say. And I will say I thank
11 you all, and I do believe that you care deeply about
12 animals. And I'm sure this is why you've brought it
13 forth, and I'm sure it's very--I think it's very well
14 intentioned. But I don't think it's a common sense
15 as you--as you do.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: It may not be
17 common sense particularly for your facility because
18 you have 24/7 coverage. But, when you read about a
19 fire at a pet store when no human being was there in
20 the middle of the night, and 200 animals perished,
21 how is that not common sense?

22 MARK GIBSON: No, it's terrible. It's
23 terrible. Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: So what's the
25 answer to that?

2 MARK GIBSON: Well, if so much--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]

4 So what--what should be done? In that circumstance
5 what should be done.

6 MARK GIBSON: [interposing] In that
7 circumstance--Yes, in that circumstance either
8 somebody should have been there, or they should have
9 spent the night.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Is that feasible
11 to have 24/7 coverage at pet shops, sleeping at the
12 pet store at night?

13 MARK GIBSON: Yes. I think it's--

14 DAVID DIETZ: [interposing] If I may.
15 The experts have already--the experts have looked at
16 that, and they and I think we need to tap into their
17 expertise with all due respect.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Which experts?

19 DAVID DIETZ: The NFPA and I think we
20 need to tap into their expertise and find out their
21 findings. They have addressed this. With all due
22 respect, I hear you saying fire sprinklers save
23 lives. Yes, to my knowledge that has been addressed
24 with humans, and when it was addressed with animals--

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]
3 What are you talking about? Animals are confined in
4 small cages when a fire happens, and they can't move
5 freely.

6 DAVID DIETZ: I'm just saying that I
7 think it would be in everybody's best interest to go
8 to who you are declaring--recognizing as the expert,
9 the NFPA, the National experts, the go-to people on
10 this and say what are your findings? Just open the
11 door to that. That's all I'm asking for the
12 opportunity to go to the people that have already
13 visited this.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: The FDNY and the
15 former Commissioner who just sat here were pretty
16 unequivocal on how sprinklers save lives.

17 DAVID DIETZ: I'm talking about the
18 people that they go to, the NF--the NFPA, the
19 National Fire Protection Association. But if the
20 answer is no, the answer is no. I'm just saying
21 would you please allow us the opportunity to open up
22 the discussions with them to explore the options and
23 what their findings were. If the answer is no, the
24 answer is no. Thank you. I just gave you an
25 alternative method, very--

2

3 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]
4 And we'll look into that. Thank you for providing
5 that.

6 DAVID DIETZ: --that people don't even
7 mention it. Nobody has said that. And I know when
8 we discussed it with the team in Asia, this system
9 could be installed for free in seven days.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: We will--

11 DAVID DIETZ: [interposing] What is
12 stopping you?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Sir, we don't
14 want to call-- [sic]

15 DAVID DIETZ: [interposing] You can get
16 on a payment plan, which costs 20 something cents a
17 day.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Sir, thank you.
19 We will look into this. I really appreciate the fact
20 that you brought something forward that we should
21 explore that potentially would cost less and could
22 do---

23 DAVID DIETZ: [interposing] But it works
24 as well.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I don't know
3 that. I'm not saying that that's not true. We will
4 look into it.

5 DAVID DIETZ: Okay.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I appreciate
7 this packet of information.

8 DAVID DIETZ: Absolutely.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you.
10 Paola.

11 PAOLA FICHERA: I was just going to say
12 that I think if anything the outcome of this [coughs]
13 discussion, we hope, is just a more--an ability to
14 have a more nuanced conversation with you guys.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]
16 Which I'm happy to have.

17 PAOLA FICHERA: Because I do also
18 believe--I mean, let's face it, we live in New York
19 City where the buildings are really old. The pipes
20 were put in a long time ago. Water pressure is an
21 issue even for residential buildings. It's
22 definitely a logistical nightmare from a business
23 owner's perspective. Having said that, we care
24 enormously about the fate of these animals. And so,
25 I would say perhaps there is a way to have a

2 conversation about a fire safety protocol that
3 applies to our businesses that looks at--[coughs]
4 excuse me--a range of options as opposed to just a
5 one-size-fits-all fix. So, I would just encourage
6 you, as you said-- You know, as you mentioned before
7 to make this an ongoing conversation--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]
9 I'm happy to have that conversation with you all.

10 PAOLA FICHERA: --with business
11 professionals so that it's not, you know, an
12 arbitrary sort of we draw the line at these types of
13 businesses. Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: No, I think--I
15 think we should all work together. Thank you, Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thank
17 you all for your testimony. How many--is it two of
18 you that are representing actual pet shops? Is that
19 correct? Pet shop?

20 MICHAEL GLASS: I'm representing a
21 registry association as well as an organization that
22 represents a number of different entities including--

23 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: New York pet shops
24 and your membership?

25 MICHAEL GLASS: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: How many of the
3 three of you have 24-hour coverage, human coverage,
4 and how many of your members have 24-hour human
5 coverage?

6 MICHAEL GLASS: I would have to gather
7 that information for you at to at a later date.

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay.

9 DAVID DIETZ: I don't have 24-hour human
10 coverage. I do have a fire smoke alarm in the store
11 and we have 24-hour surveillance systems that were
12 installed for the safety of the animals as well. So
13 if a fire--smoke happens, which is the first thing
14 that occurs, not even a fire, we're warned right
15 away. And I do live above the premises. So, I can
16 be there. We care for the animals.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You said you had
18 an on-call rotation. That means a physical person
19 there.

20 PAOLA FICHERA: Yes. So at one of our
21 animal hospital we actually do a whole lot of
22 overnight care. At the other one of our animal
23 hospitals we do. We have a couple of different
24 systems in place. We do also have a camera system
25 that can be actually accessed via the web. So those

2 of us who manage our hospital locations can actually
3 monitor our hospital locations 24/7. We also have a
4 central notification system on our fire and carbon
5 monoxide detectors. But, yes, we do also have an on-
6 call rotation, and we have a schedule of people who
7 are expected to check in on the animals that are
8 hospitalized at various scheduled throughout the
9 night. I can't honestly say that those animals are
10 monitored every minute by minute, hour by hour. The
11 hospital is certainly monitored throughout the course
12 of the evening. But I will--I will honestly say that
13 we have put in every single fire safety protocol we
14 possibly could within the confines of literally
15 having to re-dig up the entire water system of the
16 building.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do--how much--how
18 much does it cost to have a 24-hour on-call system
19 for the two?

20 PAOLA FICHERA: Well, the--I'm not aware.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I should say how
22 much is it--

23 PAOLA FICHERA: Are you talking about the
24 notification system or are you--

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: [interposing] The
3 actual cost of having someone there overnight?

4 PAOLA FICHERA: Well, I mean it's
5 definitely an expense, but I think for most people
6 who run an animal hospital anyway--I can't speak for
7 a pet store, but for most people who run an animal
8 hospital, it's an expense that they're willing to
9 take on because our clients obviously depend on us to
10 keep their pets alive. You're looking at someone who
11 probably, you know, depending on their level of
12 expertise gets paid somewhere between, you know, \$15
13 and \$25 an hour. But it really depends on whether
14 that person is a licensed technician, or that person
15 is a veterinary assistant, or that person is just a
16 kennel attendant. But in that particular case, I'd
17 say most of us who are running animal hospitals would
18 say that's just good customer service, as well as for
19 the health and safety of the animals. But, you know,
20 as Councilman Johnson said, we'd be out of business
21 really fast if our animals didn't survive the night
22 at our hospital regardless of the reason. So, you
23 know, I don't think--but I think it's a little--
24 slightly different for a pet store, which is a--you

2 know, they're not monitoring sick animals. But at a
3 hospital we are obviously.

4 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And so, you said
5 you have 24-hour coverage. How much does it cost for
6 that extra person, or how much does it cost extra to
7 have 24-hours?

8 MARK GIBSON: I have somebody there 24
9 hours, and I--it's probably--it's been that way for
10 10 or 15 years. It's along the cost that she just
11 mentioned. It's \$15 to \$20 an hour type person. For
12 overnight I have a registered--I have a licensed
13 technician when they're--when they're left, you know--
14 -

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: [interposing] Is
16 this a technician?

17 MARK GIBSON: There's a period--there's a
18 period from about 11 o'clock at night 'til 7:00 in
19 the morning where there's not a veterinarian there.
20 There's--there's just that technician.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: How much is that
22 technician?

23 MARK GIBSON: Well, they--I--I haven't--I
24 have to do the math. Figure \$20 an hour times an

2 extra ten hours a day for seven days. That's 70
3 hours and multiply it times--

4 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: [interposing] All
5 right. So we have 20 hours. I'm sorry, \$20 an hour
6 times 10 hours.

7 MARK GIBSON: Times 7 days.

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I'm just going to
9 do 365.

10 MARK GIBSON: What's that.

11 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I'm just going to
12 do 365.

13 MARK GIBSON: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

14 [laughs]

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: That's \$73,000.

16 MARK GIBSON: Yes. I mean and I don't do
17 it just for the fire. You know, I need somebody
18 watching the animals. You know, if they--if
19 something happens to them overnight, the veterinarian
20 needs to be called and the veterinarian needs to come
21 in. You know, they obviously need medications over
22 night. It's not just for fire reasons that I do that
23 but it's an added benefit.

24 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Right. I guess--
25 I'm sure not all pet shops have that extra person,

2 but I think there was a suggestion that there might
3 be a better way of going and still seeing that it
4 could be cost-prohibitive to have an extra \$73,000
5 spent on someone.

6 MARK GIBSON: They wouldn't--they
7 wouldn't pay someone that much per hour. You know,
8 we have--we have--these are--

9 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: [interposing]
10 Well, \$11 times 10 times 365. It's an extra \$40,150.
11 That's without any benefits or anything like that.
12 So it still can be a cost there that maybe--

13 PAOLA FICHERA: [interposing] I guess I'm
14 wondering if there is a way to create a fire safety
15 profile, if you will, for businesses like--that are
16 in the animal industry so that each individual
17 business owner could make some decisions based on--
18 I mean this may sound ridiculous [coughs], but I
19 always think of proving your identity system at the
20 DMV. You know, sort of one passport great. You're
21 done. But otherwise, it's four credit card and your
22 Social Security card and, you know, five piece of
23 mail. I mean I'm wondering if there is a way to
24 actually create a more nuanced law that basically
25 says look you have to have, you know, some from

2 column A and some from column B and some from column
3 C in order to comply with, you know, our standards of
4 safety as opposed to say there's only one solution
5 which is sprinklers. I don't know if that's
6 possible, and certainly that's a more complex piece
7 of legislation than the one that's being proposed.
8 But I think the point we're trying to make is that
9 obviously financially needs wise, location wise, rent
10 wise, building ownership wise, we're about as
11 different from each other as, you know, any two snow
12 flakes might be.

13 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: So there's--why
14 the different costs? So I'd like to-- I'm sure
15 Councilman Johnson will look into it. We had heard
16 around \$10 or \$12,000 and going up to \$500,000,
17 \$250,000 per location. Which is obviously a huge--a
18 huge burden. So if that's correct, obviously that is
19 very cost-prohibitive. \$10,000 while it could be a
20 burden. I don't know. Let's say it takes them out
21 of business. It still is burden.

22 PAOLA FICHERA: [interposing] We
23 actually would have done the sprinkler system if we
24 had talked about \$10 or \$20,000. It was literally
25 the--the entirely recreating--having to recreate the

2 water main system going out of the building, and
3 adding additional water mains because the sprinkler
4 system-- Although I am no engineer, the sprinkler
5 system I'm told requires an individual water main
6 system in order to maintain the pressure. Not to
7 mention the backflow valve that's required by the
8 city in order to keep the water, you know, pollutant
9 free. So it's really not the sprinkler themselves.
10 The sprinklers themselves are fine, and I think most
11 business owners could afford them. It's how we take
12 a 100-year-old building in New York City, and make it
13 handle the sprinkler system--

14 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: [interposing]

15 Sure.

16 PAOLA FICHERA: --that's the problem.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Mr. Dietz, this is
18 your invention.

19 DAVID DIETZ: [off mic] No, this has
20 been around for a while. [on mic] This has been
21 around for over 25 years. It's a chemical fire
22 extinguisher that's hung from the ceiling, and it's
23 the same thing that's used for fires or in a gas
24 station. Where if there's a smoke or fire detection,
25 it will automatically go off and cover anywhere from

2 whatever footage you want, 8 feet by 8 feet by 13
3 feet, 20 feet. You can put multiples in the room.
4 It could be done in less than 30 minutes. And you
5 will not be aware of it, I'll tell you right now is
6 with low-cost technology you can have it directed at
7 the fire using a video surveillance system, or using
8 a smoke detector where it detects smoke. And it will
9 shoot it right at that location.

10 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: How did you find
11 out about it?

12 DAVID DIETZ: I live in Asia part of the
13 year, and they have them now in almost all of the
14 factories because it's a lot cheaper to use than
15 putting in sprinkler systems, believe it or not, in
16 Asia because they have a water shortage, and pipes
17 are expensive. And in New York or anywhere-- You
18 can put them in apartments. So to save the dogs in
19 apartments, you can put a small one in there. It
20 will cost you 50 bucks. Your whole room is taken
21 care of. A 10-year license for it that will be held,
22 and inspections once a year for \$25. How can you
23 beat that? It's a real alternative.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: So you said 25
3 cents a day. So, it's roughly about \$1,000 to put
4 in?

5 DAVID DIETZ: That's right or under--or
6 under. I'm talking about even with high level
7 technology a \$1,000. It could be \$350.

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I think it's--

9 DAVID DIETZ: [interposing] This is
10 real.

11 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Council Member
12 Reynoso, do you have a question?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Well, someone
14 was making reference to the NFPA, and who was that?
15 So just--

16 DAVID DIETZ: Yes, I don't want to over-
17 step my boundaries as far as being an expert or
18 speaking directly for NFPA.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: No, but you said
20 that wanted to see if we can give the NFPA an
21 opportunity to speak on this issue to do its
22 research.

23 DAVID DIETZ: Yes, subsequent to this
24 testimony is going to be a gentleman speaking and
25 submitting a report. It's the NFPA 150, which is an

2 entire handbook on fire protection for animals. The
3 group was approached--forgive me--approximately 2012
4 with the inclusion of fire sprinklers being placed in
5 this manual and it was embraced. And when it was
6 given to a committee they ran into some of the
7 similar problems we're having here. And the
8 discussion was not-- I mean, you read that thing and
9 okay case dismissed.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So I did--so I
11 read a little bit of it, and I just wanted to make
12 mention if the committee doesn't vote it up, it
13 doesn't get--it doesn't even go through research--a
14 research phase, right. So the committee needs to
15 vote it up, and you--you can't guarantee that the
16 committee is going to do that unless you've heard
17 differently.

18 DAVID DIETZ: What I've--what I've--I've
19 only recently learned and have ventured into this--
20 this arena. And what I read about it was that the
21 committee is open to discussion. They did not write
22 this part, and they--and they want to come up with
23 some answer.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: [interposing]
25 Well, I guess what I'm trying to say is that it can

2 be open to discussion. It needs to be opened up for
3 discussion.

4 DAVID DIETZ: That's right.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I don't think
6 that the NFPA necessarily guarantees that. So
7 holding, you know, this bill hostage until someone
8 like the NFPA--a group like the NFPA figures it out
9 isn't necessarily fair to the people that are
10 actually trying to get something done. Also, from
11 what I hear in NFPA, in the committee there's--they
12 represent a large--they don't only represent a New
13 York City type of atmosphere. It's a national
14 organization.

15 DAVID DIETZ: Yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So we're talking
17 about national pork producers council.

18 DAVID DIETZ: Again, that would not apply
19 in this case. I would not encourage the committee to
20 hold up the bill for their response and their
21 determination. Allow me to--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: [interposing] I
23 think that's almost exactly what you said.

24 DAVID DIETZ: Then let me--I apologize.
25 Let me clarify.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay.

3 DAVID DIETZ: My--what I--if I--if I
4 misspoke, let's find out what they have, what
5 information they've gathered and enter that into the
6 decision-making process here if there's already been
7 discussions on that. Let's have as much expert
8 opinions and advice and determination on there.
9 There's a major difference in a sprinkler system
10 activating with animals in care, as opposed to
11 humans. A lot of us see on television and in the
12 movies the sprinkler systems go off. They put the
13 file over their head and they run out of the
14 building. There could be some adverse situations
15 that happen from these fire sprinklers. But again,
16 we're not saying no. You know, when you sign it it's
17 oppose or support. We're suggesting or requesting
18 discussion to amend to what would be applicable for
19 all parties.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So just that--in
21 City Council that's what this legislative process is
22 about. This bill isn't law yet. We have a hearing.
23 We discuss it. We get experts on both sides to give
24 us their opinions and ideas, and then we're able to
25 look at the legislation and see if it's something we

2 want to follow through. So this is that process. I
3 just want to be very clear to you that what we're
4 looking at here are what are the best possible bill
5 we can put through to make sure that these animals
6 are safe? The NFPA on the other hand suggests
7 something, puts it up to a vote in the committee.
8 The committee shoots it down. It doesn't get
9 researched. So we don't get that information. So, I
10 would appreciate. I would prefer using some type of
11 system or organization that actually has an opinion
12 on it, and doesn't need it to go up to vote. So
13 just--just really I know that while Council Member
14 Johnson was here, you mentioned NFPA asking to give
15 them an opportunity to research it. But they don't
16 necessarily research everything that's request of
17 them. It has to go up to a vote, and a vote in a
18 committee that pork producers that might not
19 necessarily understand what we're trying to do here
20 in New York City. And probably other types of
21 animals, that protect other types of animals. And
22 they're just saying in farms out in the country where
23 they're doing work with pigs, they can't necessarily
24 get the system in to put in a sprinkler system. So
25 there it might make sense. But here in New York

2 City, it's not going to be something that can happen.

3 [sic] I just want to say that with NFPA that, you

4 know, don't--your level of confidence in taking

5 research from what they've come up with is not

6 something I agree with. And then the \$250,000 that

7 would cost you, you're--you're a circumstance.

8 You're an exception and not the rule. And I want to

9 be very clear that that's something that we could

10 also look at through this process, this legislative

11 process and seeing if it makes sense one-size-fits-

12 all. Maybe that's not the case. But, when we talk

13 about small pet shops putting up \$10 to \$15,000 to

14 save animals, I think it does make sense. SO I just

15 want to make sure that, you know, across the board

16 maybe it might not make sense. But, maybe through

17 this process we're able to refine the legislation to

18 make sure that folks in your case we can find an

19 alternative, right. But, also our infrastructure in

20 the City of New York we can't hold animals hostage

21 because of our terrible infrastructure. Which is

22 what we do in many cases for a lot of things. So I

23 just want to be mindful if you have a 100-year-old

24 building, you might need to consider some type of

25 fire safety regardless. So I'm just saying the

2 infrastructure should be the excuse, but we should
3 work together to figure out what's your best option.
4 So that's my statement. And I just want to say the
5 NYPWA has a great logo. Thank you very much.

6 DAVID DIETZ: [off mic] One more thing.

7 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Sure.

8 DAVID DIETZ: [on mic] So, if you are
9 interested or consider putting in a water sprinkler
10 system, and the cost is \$10 to \$15,000 or \$20,000,
11 which we understand, you're including the
12 architectural fees, the Department of Building fees,
13 all the other paperwork that goes into that. So I'm
14 just going to make a suggestion is no problem putting
15 the water sprinkler system. But I want the
16 government to access a committee to do all the
17 filings, and all the architectural work and
18 everything else that goes with that particular
19 property. And do all that government work so we can
20 then pay to put in the fire sprinkler suppression
21 system. So, if you could do that, that would be also
22 helpful. If you mandate a fire water sprinkler
23 system, do the government work because it's really
24 difficult to hire architects and to work with the

2 city and the Department of Buildings and to
3 restructure a building. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
5 much and thank you for your testimony. I definitely
6 understood that this is not about your lack of love
7 for the animals, but are trying to deal with the
8 cost-effectiveness of what we're trying to do here.
9 So, I appreciate that. Next, we have Keith De
10 Blasio, NYPCA. Boris from Puppy Paws NYC; Joseph
11 Salvatore Powell [sp?] and Lisa Esposito. And after
12 that, we'll have our last panel with Kenneth
13 Humphrey, One Love Animal Hospital; Melissa
14 Donaldson, the Mayor's Alliance for New York City
15 Animals; Allen Bregman, New York City Vets Medical
16 Association; Scott Bellman. That will be the last
17 panel after this. I did want to mention someone had
18 mentioned a couple of council members, Lander, Eugene
19 and Levin. They're not being here is not for a lack
20 of caring about the issue. We have a lot of hearing
21 going on today, and it's hard to be at every one.
22 So, you won't see every council member at every
23 hearing.

24 Can you please each raise your right
25 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole

2 truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony
3 before this committee, and to respond honestly to
4 council member questions?

5 PANEL MEMBERS: [off mic] I do.

6 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: We're going to
7 hold on one second. We have another council member
8 who needs to vote.

9 [pause]

10 CLERK: Council Member Ulrich.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I vote aye and
12 ask that my name be added as a co-sponsor.

13 CLERK: The final vote in the Committee
14 on Housing and Buildings, 10 in the affirmative, 0 in
15 the negative, and no abstentions.

16 [pause]

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
18 much, and hearing that there's no one who is going to
19 vote, we'll close the vote. Thank you. You can
20 start at your preference.

21 BORIS ZEXTER: Hi, thank you for letting
22 us speak today. Thank you committee. My name is
23 Boris Zexter.

24 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Sorry about that.

25

2 BORIS ZEXTER: No problem. So dear
3 members, there are certainly benefits to having
4 sprinkler systems, and we're not against the health
5 and safety of animals. That being said, adding
6 sprinkler systems is easier said than done. I have a
7 pet store, and my landlord simply might now allow me
8 to alter the premise to install sprinklers. Even if
9 there's some law that says I'm right, and that my
10 landlord must allow me to install sprinkler systems,
11 he might still refuse. And even if I--if I'm right,
12 I would have to hire a lawyer to sue the landlord,
13 and that would mean I would not be able to renew my
14 lease. This is not an imaginary scenario. Two
15 months ago, I had to surrender a lease because my
16 landlord and I disagreed about structural changes to
17 a store I had already leased. This has happened to
18 me and I can see this happening to my other stores,
19 and to other stores of my people like me. As I'm
20 sure you all know, dealing with landlords in New York
21 is very challenging.

22 Landlords have a steady income and small
23 business owners who are reliant on these landlords to
24 stay afloat, have a very unfair relationship. I know
25 that this law would require changes that are

2 sometimes simply not possible. Some kind of
3 grandfather clause exemption to the law may be
4 appropriate. I also note that sprinkler systems are
5 obviously designed to save property, not caged
6 animals. A fire alarm that would notify a central
7 agency service is a better and safer solution for pet
8 stores. I'm offering my voice as a pet store owner,
9 as a member of the New York Pet Welfare Association,
10 and as someone who has spent over a decade working in
11 this industry that safety is an important issue. But
12 this law itself presents many issues for stores such
13 as mine of which there are many in New York. And
14 which this law is not adequately tolerated to
15 address. I respectfully ask that the proposal as
16 written be amended to address this concern--these
17 concerns.

18 I just wanted to add something. You
19 know, I actually called a plumber, you know, who
20 takes care of the sprinkler systems, and they gave me
21 a brief explanation that my store is about 1,000 or
22 1,200 square feet. And to adequately place a
23 sprinkler system, you know, there's much more to it
24 than just placing the sprinkler system. The gentleman
25 before said \$10 to \$12,000. You know, that range of

2 \$10 to \$12,000, it's \$2,000, you know, variation.
3 You know, I was told from the person that I spoke to
4 that it costs \$25,000 to install a sprinkler system.
5 And, you know, let alone the problems that can arise
6 from having the [bell] the sprinkler system, you
7 know, such as filing for, you know, the licenses and
8 everything else that might come with it. It's a--
9 it's a big burden but, you know, like we said before
10 it's not about the money. It's about saving animals,
11 which we're in this business. We love animals. So,
12 you know, please look at everything to, you know,
13 reconsider. You know, we don't want you to
14 reconsider, but to help us, you know, [bell] make the
15 changes that are right. Thank you.

16 JOSEPH SALVATORE POWELL: Good morning.
17 I want to thank everybody for hearing me today in the
18 City Council. I'm speaking on behalf of the
19 Veterinary Medical Association of New York City, and
20 Richmond Valley Veterinary Practice located in Staten
21 Island, New York as well as other veterinary
22 practices located across the New York City area
23 specifically on Staten Island. I'm representing my
24 family who owns Richmond Valley Veterinary Practice
25 along with two other partner and other businesses.

2 There are other business, but they do--there are
3 other businesses that are--I'm representing.
4 Although it would be desirable to have sprinklers in
5 facilities, which house animals for over 24 hours or
6 any other safety measures for that matter, it is a
7 cost that we would irrecoverable to the small
8 business because the profit margin can't offset such
9 an investment. We would especially request that all
10 existing buildings are grandfathered in, and that
11 this law is not made retroactive. And consideration
12 towards other safety measures such as smoke
13 detectors, which are on a central station and without
14 a doubt on a much longer time line than the sprinkler
15 systems. We would essentially want time to put the
16 sprinklers in. Sort of like five years, per se. And
17 we also request that a monetary grant be allocated
18 for such a project because of the fiscal expense.
19 Thank you very much for respectfully listening to
20 this statement and considering our concerns. We
21 would appreciate it if you would come up alternatives
22 for such a measure. Thank you.

23 DR. LISA ESPOSITO: Good afternoon. I'm
24 Dr. Lisa Esposito, past president of the Veterinary
25 Medical Association New York City. I am one of the

2 owners of the Richmond Valley Veterinary practice on
3 Staten Island. We also have a boarding and grooming
4 facility. We acquired the practice two years ago.
5 We have very high debt. We kept all of our staff and
6 vendors in place to maintain goodwill for the
7 community. I really applaud your concern for the
8 animals. We are definitely all congruent on that. I
9 mean I challenge anybody to say they love their pets
10 more than I do or my patients, and I actually mean
11 that. So I certainly applaud your concern. As far
12 as safety measures on site, we have two caretakers in
13 the kennel. We also employ a security company during
14 our busy season not only to make sure there's no
15 fire, but also for anybody that may be doing any kind
16 of vandalism or trying to enter either property.
17 Furthermore, we have cameras that we monitor 24/7,
18 which is somewhat addicting. Upon hearing this, one
19 would think that this is great. It is. It's a great
20 idea. Unfortunately, it goes beyond the cost of
21 doing business. I did speak to a company that would
22 install. He said you're going to have to hire an
23 engineer and an architect. You are going to
24 definitely have to add a water main.

2 In one facility, we'll probably have to
3 put in 30 sprinklers and the other one probably about
4 15. It's a very, very big undertaking to retrofit,
5 to break open the streets. So, therefore, I
6 respectfully request that this is either
7 reconsidered. We're opening up this dialogue. I
8 think we've come to some common ground. It's
9 definitely extended the timeline. Perhaps have the
10 city or state office funding to help offset the cost.
11 Because it's just beyond the cost of doing business.
12 And, you know, we're all congruent in that we would
13 like to have the most safe facilities for our
14 patients without a doubt. We just need to make this
15 something that is affordable. Thank you very much
16 for your time. I appreciate it.

17 KEITH DE BLASIO: Hi. Good afternoon.
18 My name is Keith De Blasio. I'm a pet shop owner,
19 and I actually own the pet shop that burned down on
20 Memorial Day 2010. We do not have a sprinkler
21 system. A few people testified today that many
22 animals died in that fire. I just want to go on
23 record and state that out of about 50 dogs, 100
24 birds, and thousands of fish, the only pets that
25 perished that were about 100 fish. And that was

2 caused by one of the firemen actually breaking the
3 fish tank. Obviously, this is a case-by-case issue.
4 We're just hoping that you guys look at alternatives.
5 It's my hope that another alternative such as fire
6 alarm systems that's directly connected to a central
7 agency that can notify the local fire department of a
8 fire such as they have in California. They allow and
9 permit for the choice. So an alarm system or
10 sprinklers. That's something I was going to read,
11 but that's it.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
13 much for your testimony. It's also similar to some
14 of the things that we've heard. I think we
15 definitely want to look into it. We do want to
16 protect the animals. We don't want something,
17 thought, that's going to be cost prohibitive. When
18 was the fire? I'm sorry.

19 KEITH DE BLASIO: It was 2010 on Memorial
20 Day.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: All right, and
22 where did the fire start?

23 KEITH DE BLASIO: It actually started--it
24 was--it was an electrical fire that started in the
25 fish room.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: What fire
3 suppression procedures did you have?

4 KEITH DE BLASIO: Just fire alarms.

5 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Fire alarms. How
6 long did it take for someone to get to the site when
7 the fire alarm went off?

8 KEITH DE BLASIO: Well, I was there in
9 about an hour, and they had already extinguished the
10 fire, and they were on their way out. So I would say
11 maybe a half hour, 20 minutes.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: For the other
13 owners, what fire depression activity do you have
14 currently now. What are the procedures that you have
15 in place?

16 LISA ESPOSITO: [off mic] Well, we have--

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You need your--you
18 need the mic.

19 LISA ESPOSITO: [on mic] We have smoke
20 detectors and we have, you know, people on site--

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: [interposing] 24
22 hours?

23 LISA ESPOSITO: --and security. Yes,
24 uh-huh.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Yes. And this is
3 the same question.

4 JOSEPH SALVATORE POWELL: Yes, I'm here--
5 I'm actually related to the owners.

6 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay.

7 JOSEPH SALVATORE POWELL: I'm here on
8 behalf of them.

9 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay. All right.
10 You did a good job, by the way.

11 JOSEPH SALVATORE POWELL: Thank you very
12 much, sir.

13 KEITH DE BLASIO: I have fire
14 extinguishers in every single room in my pet store,
15 and I have smoke detectors also in every single room
16 in my pet store.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And how many pets
18 do you each have in your stores?

19 KEITH DE BLASIO: At the moment, I have
20 right now 20--20 puppies.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: How many pets.

22 LISA ESPOSITO: It varies with season.
23 So, the maximum would be approximately 36 sometimes
24 or none.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And you said you
3 had done a price out of \$25,000?

4 BORIS ZEXTER: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I think--I guess
6 you raised something. I just heard roughly, briefly
7 from someone. They were basically saying that if we
8 amend it then the owner might not allow it, or might
9 not allow a pet shop to be in there if it's too
10 cumbersome? Is that what you're getting at?

11 BORIS ZEXTER: No, I was saying the
12 landlord that my landlord might not allow, you know,
13 structural changes done to his building, you know.
14 And then he might not want to renew my lease, you
15 know, and that's my business. Everything that, you
16 know, feeds me and my family is going down.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Interesting point.
18 Thank you very much for your testimony, and we
19 appreciate it. Thank you.

20 BORIS ZEXTER: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Have you reopened
22 and everything is good?

23 KEITH DE BLASIO: [off mic] Yeah, that
24 was two years ago. We opened a month later.

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. And
3 now we have the last panel Kenneth Humphreys, One
4 Love Animal Hospital; Melissa Donaldson, the Mayor's
5 Alliance for New York City Animals; Allen Bregman,
6 New York City Medical Association; Scott Bellman and
7 we have our last minute addition, Harsha Perera[sp?]
8 from the NYPWA. We also have the record, Partnership
9 for New York City in Opposition of Intro 592. We
10 have Kenneth Humphreys, Melissa Donaldson, Allen
11 Bregman, Scott Bellman, and Harsha Herrera.

12 Can you all please raise your right hand.
13 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
14 nothing but the truth in your testimony before this
15 committee, and to respond honestly to council member
16 questions?

17 PANEL MEMBERS: I do.

18 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You can begin your
19 testimony in whichever order is preferable.

20 ALLEN BREGMAN: Okay. Is this on? Okay.
21 My name is Allen Bregman. I am a veterinarian. I am
22 also the current president of the Veterinary Medical
23 Association for New York City, and Executive Board
24 Member for the New York State Veterinary Medical
25 Society. Good morning. I appreciate the opportunity

2 to speak before you today in opposition to the
3 legislation before you. As President of the
4 Veterinary Medical Association and as an Executive
5 Board Member of the New York State Veterinary Medical
6 Society, I represent the interests of over 900
7 licensed veterinarians in the five boroughs of New
8 York with over 440 residing in New York County. I
9 personally own and run two small animal clinics in
10 the borough of Brooklyn with my brother and father
11 who are also veterinarians. More than a majority of
12 these professionals own independent small businesses
13 in New York City, and would be directly impacted by
14 this legislation. We are not here before you today
15 to outward--to outwardly oppose this legislation on
16 merit. As the protectors of animals and their
17 welfare in the State of New York, we are duty bound
18 to provide the highest caliber of care and welfare to
19 these animals housed in our hospitals. You can be
20 assured that we take the safety and the security of
21 our facilities extremely serious. Thus, the
22 principle upon us--upon us, which this legislation is
23 not one we disagree with. We are seeking amendments
24 to the bill that might provide some financial relief
25 to our small veterinary clinics, who represent more

2 than 70% of all licensed veterinarians in New York
3 City. We request some additional time to--to the
4 discussion with you with--I'm sorry. Excuse me. We
5 request some additional time to discuss with you
6 alternatives such as longer timeframes to comply with
7 the new building code. Or, even grandfathering
8 clauses making it a requirement for those that
9 undergo any sort of renovations. We are asking City
10 Council to meet with us before voting on the
11 legislation in order to consider these alternatives.
12 I would also like to draw your attention to a New
13 York Times article published online November 21, 2008
14 during which the City Council heard calls for this
15 legislation, and where the City Council was quoted as
16 supporting the general principle of the bill. But
17 was hesitant to pass it for fear it would be a burden
18 to small owner business owners. I am here to tell
19 you today as a practice owner nothing has changed in
20 small business in New York City for an owner in 2015.
21 We feel that new construction or renovation certainly
22 could be held to these current standards. [bell] We
23 feel grandfathering existing structures, animal
24 hospitals, animal clinics since they should already
25 be providing a higher level of responsibility and

2 protection to their patients. Veterinarians have an
3 extremely large investment in specialized equipment.
4 And confidential medical records in addition to their
5 animal patients, and would have an extremely good
6 history--and have an extremely good history of
7 protecting them. As an alternative, we would ask you
8 to consider requirements to having a security system
9 be installed in animal housing rooms that
10 automatically ring directly to the fire or police
11 stations.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I'm going to have
13 to ask you to wrap up.

14 ALLEN BREGMAN: Okay. We ask the City
15 Council to give us a longer timeframe. Six months
16 to have this installed is insufficient. These
17 sprinkler systems, as we've heard today can cost
18 anywhere from up to 15% of a year--of a
19 veterinarian's yearly gross income. I thank you and
20 appreciate your time today.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.

22 HARSHA PERERA: Hi. Good afternoon. My
23 name is Harsha Perera, and I want to thank you for
24 the opportunity today. I'm a member of the New York
25 Public Welfare Association, which is a non-profit

2 organization, which includes pet store owners,
3 veterinarians, pet breeders, pet distributors and
4 other associations. We were formed to educate the
5 public and policymakers about the responsibility of
6 the industry to educate pet care professionals and
7 foster compliance with applicable pet care laws. To
8 advocate for responsible public policy that promotes
9 healthy pets as well as healthy businesses in New
10 York, New Jersey and beyond.

11 I am also a pet store owner. I have a
12 couple of--two pet stores in the Metropolitan area.
13 I have been--I been in that industry as a pet store
14 owner for over 20 years. My primary concern is the
15 lifetime care of the pets that I sell to my
16 customers. I am here to confirm and inform you that
17 unintended consequences of proposed Ordinance 145,
18 which is a requirement to install a sprinkler system
19 in every veterinary hospital and clinic, kennel,
20 shelter and pet stores in New York City. This
21 requirement will just decrease veterinary access
22 because veterinarians who are unable to, or unwilling
23 to install such systems. Many systems may stop
24 hospitalizing pets overnight leaving pet owners with
25 fewer options for their sick or injured pets. It can

2 also harm animals because sudden cold water from
3 sprinklers could harm the animal's health especially
4 if they are already stressed from the exposure to
5 smoke. Automatic sprinklers will cause slippery
6 floors, which will also harm the people who come to
7 rescue the animals. False alarms will cause
8 unnecessary damage to property, and to the health of
9 the animals. A sprinkler system works by suppressing
10 the fire to preserve the building not to protect
11 animals in that building. [bell] It is much better
12 or quickly--to quickly evacuate those animals through
13 the assistance of profession firefighters alerted by
14 a fire alarm system connected--

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: [interposing] Sir,
16 I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up.

17 HARSHA PERERA: --connected to a central
18 reporting station.

19 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: So if you can give
20 a final sentence.

21 HARSHA PERERA: Okay, I--the stores--the
22 two stores that I have are in very, very old
23 buildings. And in order to install a sprinkler
24 system in these buildings, it will cost me over
25 \$100,000 because the water connections are not that

2 great for--to create this pressure. And my landlord
3 is not going to agree for sure, and I don't have that
4 kind of money to invest in my business.

5 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay.

6 HARSHA PERERA: For over 20 years, which
7 I have been employing several people, and have--

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you sir.
9 Thank you for your testimony. We may have some
10 questions where you can explain some more. Thank
11 you.

12 KENNETH HUMPHREYS: Good afternoon. My
13 name is Kenneth Humphreys. I am a veterinarian and
14 been licensed in New York City for ten years. I own
15 four veterinarian facilities, One Love Animal
16 Hospital, two of those facilities in Brooklyn, one in
17 Manhattan, and recently opened one in the Bronx. I
18 am going to choose not to read a statement, but to
19 choose to speak candidly. I believe that everybody
20 that's spoken so far has their own interest, first of
21 all being the love of animals. I also believe that
22 there's been a lot of testimony of how much everybody
23 loves animals and they want to do the best for them,
24 me included. What I'm concerned about is the
25 statements of fire--sprinkler systems saving lives.

2 And we're not--we're not stepping back and actually
3 truly asking experts, those who are charged with
4 keeping animals alive and saving animals. We've had
5 a lot of testimony of how much they love animals and
6 sprinkler systems save human lives. There is an
7 example. There was an accident up at the Upper West
8 Side--let me get the name for you here. It was the
9 Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine in 2015. I
10 believe there were 10 animals that succumbed to that
11 accident. It was actually a burst water pipe. You
12 can look it up. It was actually a hot water pipe,
13 but if I believe right, that many of those animals
14 died actually from aspiration pneumonia. From
15 aspirating those--that water. So what I'm concerned
16 is that--and I'm asking the Council before they pass
17 this measure to take a step back and have a further
18 discussion. And really understand what a potential
19 sprinkler system in a fire would do to animals that
20 are housed in an environment. I'm really concerned
21 that those animals while we're trying to protect them
22 from fire are going to then succumb from their
23 injuries to inhalation.

24 My only other statement with 51 seconds
25 left here is being on the forefront of working with a

2 lot of pet owners that do have a lot of financial
3 constraints. And also working with a lot of the
4 experts witnesses here that testified, or will be
5 testifying for rescue organizations. It's groups
6 like ours that--that provides those low cost
7 opportunities to take care of those pets so they can
8 find homes. I believe by placing the greater
9 financial to the owners, that's where the--where--I
10 believe that there's going to end up being more
11 animals placed in shelters than potentially animals
12 that are going to be surviving from these fires with
13 these sprinkler systems because of the increased
14 financial costs to the owners to pay for these.
15 Thank you. [bell]

16 MELISSA DONALDSON: Good afternoon. My
17 name is Melissa Donaldson, and I'm the Deputy
18 Director of the Mayor's Alliance for New York City's
19 Animals. I would like to thank the Chair and members
20 of the Committee on Housing and Buildings for the
21 opportunity to speak today on Intro 145, which would
22 amend the New York City Building Code in relation to
23 the installation of fire sprinklers in certain
24 establishments that provide services for animals.
25 For years we have advocated for sprinklers in

2 establishments that provide services for animals,
3 both for humane reasons, and also because sprinklers
4 can help mitigate risks for first responders in the
5 event of a fire. While we want to see this new
6 measure implemented for the safety of animals and
7 people, we're concerned that an October 2015
8 effective date is too tight a deadline for the
9 veterinary clinics and boarding facilities, on which
10 the Mayor's Alliance and now participating shelters
11 and rescue groups rely heavily to provide life saving
12 services for homeless animals in New York city. We
13 believe the effective date should be amended to allow
14 veterinary clinics and boarding facilities more time
15 to absorb the cost for complying with the
16 requirement. Thank you.

17 SCOTT BELLMAN: [off mic] Oh, sorry. [on
18 mic] Thank you. My name is Scott Bellman. I'm a
19 retired New York City firefighter. I have 15 years
20 experience on the job. I also have certifications in
21 fireguard operations and citywide fireguard for
22 impairment. As a--I'm sorry. What is your name,
23 please?

24 SCOTT KENT: Kent.

2 SCOTT BELLMAN: I'm sorry. I have some
3 notes, but I'm going to basically go off the cuff on
4 a lot of things. Everybody today obviously has the
5 wellbeing of the animals first in mind. That's
6 obvious. But very few people even Mr. Cassano failed
7 to mention that I have been--Unfortunately, I have
8 been at numerous fires where there have been
9 fatalities, human and animals, many animals. Almost
10 every animal has succumbed to asphyxiation, smoke
11 inhalation. That is not addressed. That has barely
12 been addressed by the fire suppression. If a smoke
13 detector goes with the--if a sprinkler system goes
14 off, it will knock down a fire undoubtedly. It
15 creates smoke. Smoke is the three-to-one killer over
16 fire. It is going to unfortunately--most animals if
17 they're in a cage because you can't have them out and
18 running about. They have to be caged and contained,
19 if you don't have other means. The best means some
20 people mentioned are possibly a monitoring system.
21 Where, you know, first responders can get there
22 quickly, and possibly get the animals out in time.
23 That might be a good thing. The fire suppression
24 with the water sprinkler, that is going to create
25 smoke. The animals will succumb to smoke. It's--

2 unfortunately, it happens. It's just that with that.
3 And now, from there I'll go to fire safety. Fire
4 safety, which does include the sprinkler systems, is
5 a set of practices intended to reduce destruction of
6 property, not necessarily--I mean, it will save a
7 life, a human life if you have fire drills. I don't
8 know if you practice fire drills at all with your
9 children or yourselves. We practice that. Animals
10 do not practice that. They do not know how to get
11 out of the house. They will unfortunately not be
12 able to. You can. Fire safety. Fire safety
13 measures will also--Oh, forget that. Again, just as
14 I said with this, I'm glad to see you back because
15 you're obviously a big advocate on this. You're up--
16 I understand you have other duties. But as other
17 people have mentioned, serious damage, the cost.
18 Obviously, the cost is huge for these people. I'm
19 not going to go into that because I'm not here for
20 that. I'm here to tell you on a personal level what
21 causes the death of these animals. Once again, smoke
22 inhalation. You know, the cost is a huge factor and
23 obviously property owners, and if they're leasing, I
24 understand that. That's not my concern. As a first
25 responder, I'm there for life. That's why I got into

2 that business. And the sprinkler system I just don't
3 feel [bell] it's going to work. You know there has
4 to be alternatives. Please look into alternatives.
5 Think this through. There are better ways than a
6 sprinkler system. It's just not going to work.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. I know
9 we have Mr. Richard Madrid, Who Cares Associates. If
10 you can just pull up one of those chairs.

11 RICHARD MADRID: Thank you, sir.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: No, no, just pull
13 up one of those chairs to the side. Can you please
14 raise your right hand?

15 RICHARD MADRID: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do you affirm to
17 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
18 truth in your testimony before this committee, and to
19 respond honestly to council member questions?

20 RICHARD MADRID: I do.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: All right, please
22 start.

23 RICHARD MADRID: My name is Richard
24 Madrid. Thank you so much for the opportunity to
25 speak about this. I myself am an investor, builder,

2 and I've built a practice in Midtown Manhattan with
3 every intention to do everything right. We've
4 followed the letter of the law. We hired our
5 architect and our contractor, and we did everything.
6 It's a very old building. I'm not a doctor, but I do
7 love animals and I've gotten into the business of it.
8 This new proposed law will affect us financially, and
9 that's what I'm going to speak about. There is the
10 side that everyone has spoken about. It is a good
11 law. It is very good. I do agree with that. No
12 objection to that. My concerns at this point would
13 be the cost of getting the job completed by October.
14 That amount of time is going to be detrimental to the
15 practice financially. While I just got this
16 information and I rushed down here, I contacted my
17 architect to see what is this going to cost me.

18 So we're looking at very small practice
19 in Midtown Manhattan. The sprinkler system will run
20 between \$20 to \$30,000, the architectural fees and
21 the filings \$7,000 for drawings. 1.5% of
22 construction for fees. Not to mention the fact if I
23 have to bring in a line from the city for water,
24 which is about \$17,000. All of these numbers now I'm
25 swallowing instantaneously and I get nervous.

2 Because I have to figure this out. My concerns are
3 what if I can't get it completed by October, what
4 kind of penalties will I come across. I could be
5 fined by the city. I could be shut down by the city
6 all because I could not afford at this moment within
7 the next six months to complete this task. I have
8 every intention to make it happen especially if the
9 law squeezes down on me. Because that's the one part
10 that we want to do is comply. Our hearts and
11 interests are always for the animals, and that's why
12 we've built and moved into a community that needed
13 that service.

14 So I totally am for the saving and
15 prevention, and especially like you said, the smoke
16 inhalation is one of the primary things not spoken
17 about. And I thought that was really important to
18 point that that would help in every aspect of a
19 sprinkler system. So my concerns for the Council
20 would be to please consider some way of thinking
21 about no so much being grandfathered in. It is a
22 good--You know, we were grandfathered in not having
23 to put in sprinklers in our very old when we built
24 it. But now, I'm running into the situation where if
25 I have to come up with a plan to complete this task

2 by October, if I'm unable to what penalties will I
3 run into? What kind of--you know, can I be shut down
4 because I didn't comply? Is there anything that can
5 be helpful to the veterinary hospitals. We do have
6 overnight care. Consider that I pay a premium
7 overnight technician. So we do have someone. Thank
8 you so much, and I hope that you will consider that.

9 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
10 much for your testimony. I'm going to allow my
11 colleague, Council Member Johnson who is the prime
12 sponsor and I believe Council Member Crowley who is
13 one of the sponsors as well to make a statement and
14 if you have any questions.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair
16 Williams, and thank you all for being here, for being
17 patient. I appreciate that you all have taken the
18 time out of your busy days to come here because it's
19 so important to you. I just want to clarify a few
20 things so folks understand. This bill was introduced
21 last year, and the bill said 18 months from when it
22 was introduced--[coughs] excuse me--would be the
23 effective date. I am not looking to create a
24 timeframe that doesn't work for folks that would need
25 to comply. So, I think it makes sense to potentially

2 do 18 months from--if this bill is adopted to give a
3 longer period of time. And as I said before, I hope
4 you all were here. Depending on the facilities that
5 you run, if it's a hospital that has overnight care,
6 I think we need to look at each individual type of
7 business, and what makes sense for those businesses.
8 I'm not sure that a one-size-fits-all solution is
9 actually best here. So I think we can--we can work
10 with--with some of you, and figure out the best way
11 to do it I will say that I do consider the former
12 Fire Commissioner for the City of New York to be an
13 expert. He's worked--

14 SAL CASSANO: [off mic]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: --He's an
16 expert. So when Sal Cassano is here, and he talks
17 about the importance of sprinklers in saving lives
18 and in saving property, I don't think he's making
19 that up after more than four decades of being on the
20 force. So I think that's valuable, but again, I in
21 no way am trying to infer that any of you have
22 nothing but the best interests of animals. I mean I
23 know that's--that's why you're doing this type of
24 work. And that's the intention of this legislation
25 as well. But I think as this process moves along, we

2 can work together, and potentially figure out a way
3 depending on the type of establishment, to figure out
4 what makes the most sense. Because we don't want to
5 be punitive, and we don't want to do things that are
6 going to jeopardize veterinary services, animal
7 hospitals, and that type of really important care
8 that you call provide in the city. So I just wanted
9 to make that clarification of the implementation
10 date. It wouldn't be October, 2015. That's not when
11 it will be. It would be much further down the line,
12 and I'm happy to work with you all. Thank you for
13 being here today.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman, Chair Williams for having today's hearing.
16 I want to thank the main sponsor of this bill that
17 puts sprinklers in pet shops, animal hospitals,
18 kennels, veterinarian clinics and pounds. The main
19 sponsor Council Member Corey Johnson for your
20 unwavering advocacy for animals. I am the Chair of
21 the Fire Committee. My name is Elizabeth Crowley,
22 and I am very dedicated to protecting people and
23 property as well as animals. I've chaired the
24 committee for over six years, and there's no doubt in
25 my mind when you have a sprinkler system in a

2 building you will save lives, animals and property.
3 Now, you know, I'm glad that Sal Cassano, who has
4 held every uniformed position in the Fire Department
5 was here to also support the expansion of sprinkler
6 systems in buildings. I know that with the passage
7 of a bill like this we will go a long ways in
8 protecting animals. And so, I'm proud to be a co-
9 sponsor of this bill, and we've waited long enough in
10 the Council for a hearing. And there is a reasonable
11 amount of time within the bill that allows for the
12 various different establishments to get re-outfitted
13 and strengthen the fire protection. So where there
14 is smoke, there is fire, and water helps put out the
15 fire. And so again, I want to thank the Chair for
16 having this hearing, and I'm committing to partner
17 with you in helping get this legislation passed to
18 become a law. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you, Council
20 Member. Thank you all for your testimony today. It
21 hasn't fallen on deaf ears. We definitely want to
22 find the middle ground between to make sure we can do
23 something to keep animals safe without making it
24 cost-prohibitive for folks to actually do it. And,
25 of course, as many of you said and thank you to the

2 Mayor's Office as well. We want to make sure it's in
3 time so people can actually get it done. So thank
4 you so much for your testimony. We appreciate it.
5 And seeing that no one else has signed up for
6 testimony today, we give thanks to all who did so and
7 spent time to give us their opinion. This hearing is
8 now closed.

9 [gavel]

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1 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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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 April 22, 2015