

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

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February 25, 2020
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Chairperson

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Earth Day Initiative

1

2

JANAYA JONES: Mic check, mic check.

3

This is the Committee on Environmental Protection.

4

Today's date is February 25, 2020. And this is being

5

recorded by Janaya Jones.

6

CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: [gavel] All

7

right, good morning everyone. I'm Costa

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Constantinides, chair of the Environmental Protection

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Committee, and today the committee will hear

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oversight on the challenges New York City faces in

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meeting its mandated greenhouse gas reductions. We

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will also hear two bills intended to help better

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monitor our greenhouse gas emissions. Since 2007 New

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York City has committed, by legislation, and Samara I

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know was a part of that, working with Jim Gennaro at

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the time, and I was just coming on staff at that

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moment to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. New

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York City has maintained a greenhouse gas inventory

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and updated that inventory. However, despite its

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commitments, ah, we haven't yet achieved our

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greenhouse gas reductions goals as we would like.

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Understanding the net carbon impact of budgetary

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decisions as well as the social cost of carbon will

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enable the council to better gage the implications of

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every appropriation in the budget on the city's net

1 greenhouse gas output and will enable the council to
2 make fully informed decisions and take into account
3 how expenditures affect our city government's
4 greenhouse gas emissions. Local Law 22 of 2008
5 mandates a 30% reduction of citywide emissions by
6 2030 relative to a 2005 baseline, and a 35% reduction
7 in city government emissions by 2017. Local Law of
8 2008 also required an inventory and analysis of city
9 emissions for the fiscal year, ending in the previous
10 calendar year, including the percentage change in
11 citywide and city government emissions relative to
12 emissions for 2005 baseline by September 17 of each
13 year. The Mayor's Office failed to post in 2018 and
14 by the 2019 deadline. I look forward to hearing
15 those numbers today, as well as of February 19 of
16 this year all the emissions data from fiscal 2017 is
17 available on the website, so I hope we have that
18 data. In 2014, ah, the administration updated these
19 goals, calling for a 40% reduction in city emissions
20 by 2030 and 80% reduction by 2050 as part of One City
21 Built to Last, transforming New York City buildings
22 for a low carbon future initiative. These goals were
23 codified into law with the bill that we passed here
24 in the council, Local Law 27 of 2019. In the OneNYC

1
2 2050 plan released in April of last year these goals
3 were updated to be 100% renewable clean energy system
4 by 2040 and net zero emissions by 2050. In order to
5 meet this commitment of 100% clean electricity by
6 2040 the city aims to deploy increased wind
7 generation, both offshore and upstate, commit a
8 significant expansion of solar energy production over
9 the next 20 years, we have a few ideas on how to get
10 that done and seeks to increase transmission capacity
11 bringing renewable energy generated upstate into the
12 city. Based New York City's fiscal 2017 greenhouse
13 gas inventory, ah, we missed it by 1% of reductions
14 by 2017. So the emissions defined as all direct and
15 indirect greenhouse gas emissions from stationary
16 energy, energy used by building other [inaudible],
17 fugitive emissions from natural gas distribution
18 within the city limits, on-road transportation,
19 railway, marine navigation, aviation within limits,
20 wastewater treatment within the city limits.
21 Wastewater generated, ah, solid waste generated with
22 the city minus those captured as part of the city's
23 greenhouse gas inventory are down 17% relative to the
24 2005 levels. So we do have a lot more work to do.
25 There also appear to be some interesting

1
2 conversations to be had around the, our review of the
3 city data. You know, it shows 100% reduction in the
4 quantity of number 6 fuel oil burned and a
5 corresponding 100% reduction in greenhouse gas
6 emissions from number 6 fuel oil, ah, despite the
7 fact that we still burned 6 oil in fiscal year 2017.
8 Ah, we need to get, we need to redouble our efforts
9 in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reconsider
10 our support for the installation, if we're going, if
11 we're going to get where we need to go. Intro 270
12 would mandate the preliminary budget accounting and
13 executive budget accounting of all carbon emissions,
14 offsets, mitigation, net carbon impact generated by
15 each unit of appropriation in the preliminary budget
16 by each agency and by the entire city government,
17 including changes from the previous year's adopted
18 budget to carbon emissions, offsets, mitigation, and
19 net carbon impact, including explanation of the cause
20 of recording differences. This Local Law would take
21 effect immediately. Intro 1720 would require the
22 Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability or
23 agency or office of the mayor's designation to
24 develop a climate emissions plan projection for each
25 city agency and each affiliated governmental

1 organization, in order to ensure each city agency and
2 affiliated organization remains below the upper level
3 of greenhouse gas emissions required to achieve the
4 city's climate reduction goals. This law will also
5 take effect immediately. We need to make sure that,
6 you know, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. So
7 we have to make sure our planning is in the place
8 that we know it needs to be and I look forward to
9 hearing these two bills and having this conversation
10 today to get better understanding of what's going on,
11 and at this time I'll bring the administration
12 forward to be sworn in. I want to thank Samara
13 Swanson, our counsel, Jonathan Seltzer, our finance
14 analyst. I know Nadia Johnson and Ricky Charlow are
15 usually our policy analysts today, but they are not
16 able to be here, but we have Patrick, so thank you
17 for assisting today, and of course my own counsel,
18 Nicholas Wizowski. If anyone feels very strongly
19 about anything we say today we do this. We don't
20 applaud, and if you're not happy, ah, with something
21 that's being said you can always do this, but please
22 don't boo. [laughter] Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Would you please
25 raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that

2 the testimony you are about to give will be the
3 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
4 today?

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah.

6 GINA BOCRA: UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: All right.

8 Anthony, how are you?

9 ANTHONY FIORE: [inaudible].

10 GINA BOCRA: Good morning, Chair
11 Constantinides and members of the committee on
12 Environmental Protection. I'm Gina Bocra, chief
13 sustainability officer at the Department of
14 Buildings. Joining me today are Anthony Fiore,
15 deputy commissioner and chief energy management
16 officer for the Department of Citywide Administrative
17 Services, and Leah Cairon, assistant deputy director
18 for Green Building and Energy Efficiency. My
19 colleagues and I are pleased to be here today to
20 discuss the city's efforts to meet our carbon
21 reduction commitments. I will offer brief testimony
22 regarding our implementation of the Climate
23 Mobilization Act and the work that the department is
24 doing around sustainability to address greenhouse gas
25 emissions coming from buildings. Anthony will then

1 offer testimony regarding the two bills being heard
2 today and the establishment of an annual carbon
3 accounting and carbon reduction reporting requirement
4 for agencies. The department takes seriously its
5 obligation to address greenhouse gas emissions coming
6 from buildings and it is well positioned with the
7 largest energy team anywhere in the country to
8 support the city's goal of achieving carbon
9 neutrality. The department has established an Office
10 of Sustainability, which includes a sustainability
11 enforcement unit and an energy code compliance unit.
12 Our Office of Sustainability is hard at work
13 enforcing our stringent energy conservation code and
14 implementing the Climate Mobilization Act as well as
15 other sustainability laws, which I will discuss
16 momentarily. The Climate Mobilization Act includes
17 Local Laws 92 and 94 of 2019, which require all new
18 buildings and existing buildings undergoing certain
19 major roof renovations to install solar photovoltaic
20 system, a green roof system, or a combination of the
21 two, and Local Law 97 of 2019, which regulates
22 greenhouse gas emissions from buildings exceeding
23 25,000 square feet. Regarding Local Laws 97 and 94,
24 the department is focusing on educating the industry
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1 around the requirements of these laws and has issued
2 a service notices and a buildings bulletin to provide
3 additional guidance to the industry as they
4 incorporate photovoltaic systems and green roofs into
5 the design of their buildings. The department also
6 regularly fields questions regarding the requirements
7 of these laws and will soon be releasing additional
8 guidance, which will include a detailed FAQ. To date
9 these requirements apply to nearly 1800 buildings.
10 Regarding Local Law 97, the department has already
11 taken significant steps to implement this law, which
12 regulates greenhouse gas emissions from certain large
13 buildings, beginning in 2024. The department has
14 established an Office of Building Energy and
15 Emissions Performance, which is tasked with
16 overseeing a program to regulate greenhouse gas
17 emissions from buildings. The advisory board created
18 this, by this law to provide guidance to the
19 department as it implements Local Law 97 has also
20 been appointed and convened. The advisory board
21 includes architects, engineers, property owners,
22 representatives from the business sector and public
23 utilities, environmental justice advocates, and
24 tenant advocates. Today the advisory board has met
25

1 two times. We'll meet again later this week. These
2 meetings will continue regularly as the advisory
3 board prepares to submit a report to the mayor and
4 City Council in 2023, which will include
5 recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions
6 from buildings. The department looks forward to
7 updating this committee as it moves forward in its
8 implementation of this historic law. In addition to
9 enforcing the energy code, enforcing existing laws
10 that require certain buildings to report their energy
11 and water use to, and to perform retro commissioning,
12 and implementing the Climate Mobilization Act, the
13 department submitted revisions to the energy code to
14 the City Council late last year, which bring the
15 energy code up to date with the 2020 New York State
16 Energy Conservation Construction Code and aligns with
17 the New York State Stretch Energy Code developed by
18 the New York State Energy Research and Development
19 Authority, which provides additional energy savings
20 over the New York State energy code, and which made
21 additional amendments tailored to the unique needs
22 and characteristics of the city's built environment.
23 The department is establishing an Office of
24 Alternative Energy, which will assist with the review
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1
2 and approval of certain applications submitted to the
3 department in connection with alternative energy
4 projects and the department is implementing a law
5 that requires certain buildings to publicly disclose
6 their energy use, which means we will begin seeing
7 energy grades posted on our buildings later this
8 year. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
9 before you today. I will now turn to Anthony to
10 offer DCAS' perspective on this important topic.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Gina, before we do
12 that, can I just ask a few questions related to this
13 testimony...

14 GINA BOCRA: Sure.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...related
16 to this testimony, just, we're not gonna, since you
17 brought up the Climate Mobilization Act this gives me
18 an opportunity to ask some questions since I have DOB
19 here.

20 GINA BOCRA: Of course.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Um, are you
22 going to be the director of OBEEP?

23 GINA BOCRA: I am.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You are?
25 OK. That's fantastic. How many staff members do you

1
2 foresee OBEEP hiring up as we are looking to
3 implement Local Law 97?

4 GINA BOCRA: A great question. Initially
5 we are hiring six professionals. This includes, um,
6 two engineers, an architect, data analyst, attorney,
7 and a project manager.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And when it
9 comes to the Retrofit Accelerator and the technical
10 assistance, ah, that, you know, I have several
11 business owners who are approaching me now and saying
12 I'm very interested in the implications of Local Law
13 97, I want to get more educated, I want to be able to
14 start thinking about the retrofits that I need, which
15 is what we're encouraging, right? I don't want
16 everyone to wait till 2023 to hand in their homework.
17 I'd rather they get a jump on it and start getting
18 those emissions reductions now. Do we have the
19 capacity at the Retrofit Accelerator and within DOB
20 to offer that technical assistance now that building
21 owners can get that, that jump if they wanted in
22 2020.

23 GINA BOCRA: Our team will do whatever we
24 can at Department of Buildings to help owners. But
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1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION 16
2 I'll defer to MOS to talk about the Retrofit
3 Accelerator.

4 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Sure.
5 Thank you for the question. So yes we are prepared
6 to help building owners through the New York City
7 Accelerator. We've just recently relaunched the
8 program, ah, and we plan to assist 5000 buildings in
9 the coming three years with free technical advisory
10 services. We'll connect building owners to
11 financial, financing opportunities incentives. Um,
12 this represents a 35 million dollar involvement on
13 the part of the city and these services will be
14 available to all buildings 25,000 square feet and
15 above that are subject to, ah, the, the requirements
16 under Local Law 97 and also to all affordable housing
17 properties.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So the
19 question I have then is, ah, you said 5000 over the
20 next three years?

21 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: That's
22 right.

23 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: The buildings, the
24 universe that we're talking about, there are about
25 50,000, um, so let's say we have a run on Retrofit

1 Accelerator, right? Everyone wants this technical
2 assistance. How do we see ourselves ramping up to
3 meet what could be a tenfold demand?
4

5 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: So
6 that's a great question. I think if we see that
7 demanding increasing we'll look at the resources that
8 we've allocated. For now we know that most buildings
9 will not be subject to, as you know, the requirements
10 that first come into place in 2024. But we
11 completely agree with your assessment, that we would
12 like to see buildings do this work as soon as
13 possible.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I think it
15 demystifies it, right? I mean, I think that there is
16 a lot of misinformation out there and what this bill
17 actually does.

18 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Um-
19 hmm.

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Um, that's
21 why I, I'm very clear about my catch, you know, my
22 sort of catchphrase for this is I don't want your
23 money, I want your carbon. This is, this is not a
24 revenue bill.

25 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Right.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Correct? We
3 didn't write this legislation, and I hope the people
4 that are continuing to say that it's a revenue bill
5 should be watching this podcast right now. Ah, you
6 know, this is not a revenue bill. This is a bill
7 that we want these deep retrofits from building
8 owners that are achievable but aggressive, right? So
9 I think that we just need to, what is our outreach
10 looking like to these building owners that they
11 understand some of these, because I know that
12 there's, there's a lot of powerful entities that are
13 putting a lot of misinformation out there.

14 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: That's
15 right.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I mean,
17 there was still, there was an article in the *Real*
18 *Deal* last week that, ah, there are certain entities
19 that are still harping that this bill could be
20 changed in the next council, ah, instead of dealing
21 with the actual real realization that they should get
22 moving [laughs]. So how do we, how do we, sort of
23 cutting through some of that nonsense?

24 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: It's a
25 great question, so thank you, Council Member. I

1 think that a big part of the Accelerator's work will
2 be in working on marketing materials and outreach to
3 make sure that building owners understand exactly
4 what is required of them and what is not, and how to
5 go about, ah, doing the work that's necessary to
6 comply. And I know that the Department of Buildings
7 will also be putting forward information to support
8 that.

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I look
11 forward to partnering with you. This isn't a hearing
12 about Local Law 97, um, but it does have a direct
13 impact on how we are, I guess the last question I
14 have on 97 is how are we envisioning, you know, I'll
15 wait that for Anthony 'cause I think the, the DCAS,
16 that's more of DCAS' territory. But I definitely
17 appreciate this conversation. We have to work
18 together on this and I think we're gonna have a
19 hearing in the near future about Local Law 97
20 implementation so we can have a much longer
21 conversation.

22 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Great.

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Anthony.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Good morning,
25 Chair Constantinides and members of the Committee on

1 Environmental Protection. And my name is Anthony
2 Fiore. I'm the deputy commissioner and chief energy
3 management officer for the Department of Citywide
4 Administrative Services. I thank you for the
5 opportunity to testify today regarding the
6 establishment of an annual carbon accounting and
7 carbon reduction reporting requirements for agencies.
8 Over the last five years since the city's commitment
9 to reducing 80% of its missions by 2050, New York
10 City has dedicated itself to becoming a national and
11 global leader in climate change mitigation. To serve
12 as a model for and drive change within the private
13 sector towards decarbonization, city government has
14 committed itself to efforts to transfer energy
15 management and achieve major emissions reductions
16 across our own portfolio. In the last two years
17 alone this council and this administration have
18 demonstrated their commitment to achieving near-term
19 emission reductions at scale by championing
20 groundbreaking policy efforts. First, in June 2017
21 in response to President Trump's withdrawing from the
22 Paris Climate Agreement Mayor de Blasio issued
23 Executive Order 26, which committed the city to
24 upholding the principles and objectives of the Paris
25

1 Climate Agreement, which include achieving economy-
2 wide carbon neutrality by 2050 and mandated that
3 agencies develop their own greenhouse gas reduction
4 plans. The issuance of Executive Order 26 led to the
5 formulation of the 1.5 Degree Celsius Plan and
6 subsequently OneNYC 2050, where the administration
7 has committed to achieving citywide carbon neutrality
8 by 2050, in alignment with the goals of the Paris
9 agreement. Last April the council passed the Climate
10 Mobilization Act that set forth new in turn emissions
11 reduction commitments for the city that will ensure
12 that we meet our climate goals. Under the Climate
13 Mobilization Act city government is mandated to
14 achieve a 40% reduction in emissions from its
15 operations by 2025 and a 50% reduction in emissions
16 by 2030 from a 2006 baseline. These new city
17 emission reduction targets are more stringent than
18 those set for the private sector, showing the city's
19 commitment to leading the way and going further
20 faster. As the hub for energy management across the
21 city, DCAS has worked intensively with our agency
22 partners to build a culture of energy efficiency
23 across the city's buildings and provide agencies with
24 the technical guidance, planning, staffing support,
25

1 training, and contractual and financial resources
2 necessary to achieve energy and emission reductions
3 at scale that will help meet our mandated goals and
4 go beyond. DCAS has become agencies' one-stop shop
5 for assistance with preparing their facilities for a
6 low-carbon future. On the ground, the city has
7 focused on transferring energy management across our
8 portfolio of more than 4000 public buildings by
9 centralizing energy management activities within DCAS
10 and undertaking efforts across four interrelated
11 areas. First, we are rigorously analyzing data to
12 identify opportunities for operational adjustments or
13 projects to improve efficiency. Second, we are
14 performing outreach and training to elicit energy
15 efficiency behavioral change among building users.
16 Third, we are strengthening operations in maintenance
17 practices to squeeze the most out of our existing
18 equipment and ensure we get all the benefits of new
19 equipment. And fourth, we are implementing energy
20 efficiency retrofits in clean energy generation
21 projects. Since 2014 the city has undergone 2200
22 energy efficiency retrofit and clean energy projects
23 across nearly 1500 buildings. These investments have
24 yielded substantial dividends. We have created or
25

1 retained 3600 green jobs, upscaled 1700 of city
2 employees, and generated expected annual cost savings
3 for the city of more than 70 million dollars per
4 year. Overall, emissions from city government
5 operations have fallen almost 30% from the baseline
6 and emissions from city buildings have decreased 7%
7 more than those from private buildings. Critically,
8 the city has achieved these reductions while
9 providing additional services to more New Yorkers,
10 such as universal pre-kindergarten, air conditioning
11 in every classroom, enhanced wastewater treatment,
12 driving it cleanest harbor water quality in 100
13 years, and expanded healthcare services through New
14 York City Health and Hospitals. On Intro 270 of 2018
15 this bill requires that agencies and city government
16 report out on their net carbon impact generated by
17 each unit of appropriation as part the preliminary
18 and executive budget review process. The
19 administration understands the intent behind this
20 bill is to demonstrate transparency in what
21 investments are being made to mitigate climate
22 change. The administration supports transparency and
23 accountability when it comes to reporting on the
24 meaningful efforts undertaken by the city to combat
25

1 the effects of climate change. This is especially
2 true when it comes to investments in climate change
3 mitigation initiatives and it is why such investments
4 have been centralized under DCAS. As the hub for
5 energy management, DCAS has been given a 3 billion
6 dollar, 10-year capital plan solely focused on energy
7 management and climate change mitigation. We believe
8 this meets most, if not all, of what this bill
9 intends to achieve and are happy to work with the
10 council to efficiently address any additional
11 information they may be looking for. On Intro 1720
12 of 2019, this bill requires that each mayoral agency
13 and affiliated government organization develop an
14 annual climate emission plan project and report out
15 progress during the physical budgeting process. The
16 city recognizes that in order to achieve the scale of
17 reductions contemplated in Local Law 97 in the time
18 required as well as carbon neutrality by 2050 it is
19 important that each agency have clear emission
20 reduction targets. Clear emission expectations will
21 catalyze innovation, allow agencies the flexibility
22 to optimize their own portfolio reductions, and
23 provide transparency in how each agency is
24 contributing to the overall portfolio requirements.
25

1 We believe if crafted carefully an agency-specific
2 carbon budget target will facilitate achievement of
3 these ambitious and necessary emission reductions.

4 We support a majority of elements in this bill, but
5 want to be able to preserve the flexibility afforded
6 to us under Local Law 97 to manage energy and
7 emission reductions from government operations as a

8 portfolio and avoid duplication of reporting. For
9 example, it will be important to keep in mind the

10 diversity of city, of the city's portfolio of
11 buildings in size, age, and function. The portfolio

12 includes over 4000 buildings and facilities covering
13 over 59 unique typologies. These typologies range

14 from courthouses, firehouses, large-scale office
15 buildings, libraries, museums, police precincts,

16 sanitation garages, school buildings, wastewater and

17 water supply treatment plans, and cultural
18 institutions. Nearly three-quarters of the building

19 stock is 50 years or older and 40% are 80 years or
20 older. How these buildings are allocated, the

21 progress that has already been made, and the
22 opportunities available for further reductions across

23 agencies are all-important factors in determining a
24 methodology of allocating agency-specific emission

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1
2 reduction requirements. DCAS is finalizing a scope
3 of work to develop an implementation plan that will,
4 among other things, provide a fair and equitable
5 methodology for assigning agency-specific emission
6 reduction requirements, prioritize investments by
7 intervention type and location, considering technical
8 potential, cost effectiveness, scalability, and
9 catalytic potential, define resource needs, and
10 develop a model to facilitate agency-specific road
11 maps. In closing, the city supports the spirit of
12 accountability of these bills and will continue in
13 our efforts to ensure transparency in our work in
14 progress. We appreciate this committee and the
15 council in general for its leadership and partnership
16 in our shared interest in ensuring that New York City
17 serves as a global leader in confronting the climate
18 crisis. Thank you again for inviting us to testify.
19 And we'd be happy to answer any questions that you
20 may have.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: OK, so I'm
22 gonna ask, thank you for that testimony. I'm gonna
23 ask the question I was gonna ask before but I stopped
24 myself because I felt that you're a part of that
25 conversation. So last year in the city budget we had

1
2 60 million dollars allocated for retrofits as part of
3 the, ah, reduction of, ah, you know, the first down
4 payment on Local Law 97. So what buildings did we
5 target? How was that 60 million dollars spent, or
6 how did we think about where we were going to spend
7 it to reduce emissions? Since we were talking about
8 Local Law 97 I, I figured this is a DCAS question.
9 If MOS or DOB has something to chime in I'd be happy
10 to listen as well.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Thank you for
12 the question. Um, so there are, there are a number
13 of factors that determine, um, where we make
14 investments. There's financial metrics. There are
15 emission metrics. There, um, is coordination with
16 other planned construction activities, contractor
17 availability, um, and other resources that all go
18 into the calculus of where these investments need to
19 be made. Um, we work very closely with our agency
20 partners to understand the needs of their buildings
21 and then fund, ah, investments in those buildings.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So do we
23 know, we have a list of what buildings met that
24 criteria and how those projects are moving forward?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Sure.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I know, I,
3 believe me, I know that the city capital process
4 doesn't snap our fingers and that there are 60
5 million buildings that are done, though I wish that
6 could be the case. But I know in certain cases we
7 are able to expedite and I'm wondering like what
8 buildings were, did that meet that criteria and how,
9 what stages the various parts of constructions are
10 being done?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: So we track
12 all, all the investments by building, by agency, um,
13 the cost of the projects, the energy reductions, the
14 emission reductions, ah, the payback period and so
15 forth. We have all that information available to
16 share with the council.

17 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: And, I mean, I think
18 that's part of my frustrations, and I'll just tell
19 you, my, my frustration is that I'm going to have a
20 budget hearing on March 4 with DEP And becomes, MOS
21 is not part of, they're a mayoralty, they're an
22 agency, not a department, these questions I can't ask
23 them during the budget hearing. I'd have to come to
24 another hearing at another time where that's not the
25 focus and ask these questions. So I, I think we have

1
2 to find a better way to be able to dive into these
3 numbers that we can have a budget hearing, we can
4 have a real budget hearing, not a non-budget budget
5 hearing like we're having at the moment where I'm
6 asking these questions.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Yeah, and
8 every year when DCAS testifies during the budget
9 hearings, um, we're happy to report out on that.
10 Again, you know, we've, we've centralized, um, the
11 investments under DCAS so that we can coordinate
12 those, those initiatives we're happy to, ah, testify
13 to that during the budget hearings.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: OK, so I
15 look forward, that's coming up in a couple weeks. So
16 I, I would hope to hear that during your testimony
17 and, and if I'm able to be there I will absolutely
18 come and ask those questions so I'm not part of those
19 particular committees. Um, so let's dive into sort
20 of these pieces of legislation. Ah, did we meet our,
21 our set of emissions goals for 2018? I know 2019 is
22 due September 17. But did we hit our goals in 2018
23 that should have been released in September?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Um, so the,
25 the last published data is from 2017.

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Um-hmm,
3 correct.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: We don't yet
5 have the full results from 2018. They are still
6 being evaluated. I can ask Leah to talk about that
7 as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Is there a
9 reason that they're, if I'm misunderstanding the law,
10 is there a reason they're not done yet?

11 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Thank
12 you for the question. Um, yes, so we are still, ah,
13 finishing the analysis for the 2018 year. Um, the
14 reason that we are a little bit behind is that we
15 have updated the methodology for assessing the carbon
16 intensity of the power grid this year. Um, the
17 reason that we did that is that the methodology was
18 originally established in 2007. Since 2007 some data
19 sources have become unavailable. Some new data
20 sources have become available, and so it was time for
21 us to update and improve that process, which is what
22 we've done. We do look forward to, to putting that
23 report forward as soon as it available.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Do we have
25 an idea of when that's going to be available?

2 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Ah, I
3 can't give a specific date at this time, but I do
4 think that it will be coming out shortly and we are
5 finalizing the process of that analysis.

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So I guess
7 the few questions I'll have are when will, what is
8 the criteria, that new criteria, will that be made
9 available to the council and to the public, and then
10 will then we get going forward, right, 'cause
11 September 17, not that I'm in a rush to get to the
12 fall, ah, but, you know, we are only seven months
13 away, ah, from, ah, you know, from the next report
14 being do, we'll be, moving forward will we be able to
15 meet our deadlines?

16 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Yes,
17 we believe that moving forward we'll be able to meet
18 our deadlines. Like I mentioned, this is a one-
19 time...

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: OK.

21 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON:
22 ...situation where we've updated...

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: OK.

24 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: ...the
25 methodology and I'm happy to come back to you about,

1
2 um, you know, how we'll be able to publish the
3 details of that methodology.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You know,
5 so, I mean, I know we're building the solar panel
6 while we're using the solar panel, but, I mean, we
7 want to make sure that, you know, we are, you know,
8 that we're getting this information to everyone in a
9 way, um, that allows us to pivot, right, because
10 government so often is like a very large vessel that
11 doesn't really turn well and if we're not able to get
12 this data in a timely way, um, we would need to turn
13 faster, right? We would need to be able to say we
14 are either not meeting our targets and have to sort
15 of double down, or that we're doing very well and we
16 just have to continue to do that, right?

17 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: We are
18 committed to continuing this annual reporting and we
19 know how important it is for transparency and
20 accountability, so yes, agreed.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So on, is
22 NYCHA buildings part of that inventory?

23 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Um, to
24 the best of my knowledge, yes. It's citywide.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: OK. And so
3 they're a part, it's citywide so NYCHA buildings are
4 part of that.

5 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Right.

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And I know
7 that as part of Local Law 97 they're made to, ah,
8 give best efforts to participate. Do we know how
9 we're targeting NYCHA to ensure that many of those
10 buildings can get compliant? I know we do have a lot
11 of federal and state gaps in NYCHA, but how do we,
12 how do we sort of envision NYCHA participating in
13 Local Law 97 and the reductions. As an overall
14 portfolio that we need as a city, how do we, those
15 residents deserve it, too. We can't create two
16 cities, one where there are dirtier buildings because
17 we can't afford it and one that, you know, where we
18 are, right? There has to be that environmental
19 justice. How do we envision them participating, ah,
20 in this, in these reductions that they need, 'cause
21 they're breathing in, when those boilers burn in the
22 basement they build in, they breathe in all those
23 fumes. We know when we have renewable energy in a
24 building it's not just great for climate change, but
25

1
2 it's also good for air quality. So how are we
3 getting them to be part of it?

4 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Great
5 question, thank you Council Member. Um, so as you
6 alluded to under Local Law 97 and as you know NYCHA
7 is working to achieve a 40% reduction by 2030, which
8 is in line with the requirements of the private
9 sector.

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Um-hmm.

11 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Um, I
12 can't speak to the specifics of their, ah, strategy
13 to achieve that at the moment, but it is a portfolio-
14 wide strategy, so like DCAS' approach they will have
15 greater flexibility to be able to do more in
16 buildings that, you know, are ready based on their
17 capital cycle, for example, um, and to be able to be
18 strict about their approach.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Are we
20 engaging with the council for potential capital
21 projects? I know that it's coming to that time of
22 year where, ah, you know, council members have and
23 borough presidents have capital funds that can be
24 allocated that can do some of this work. Are we
25 having these sort of partnership conversations to

1
2 help all buildings, but including NYCHA, be part of
3 this process so it's maybe not just the
4 administration but that there are council members,
5 the speaker, borough president, all have capital
6 allocations that can assist. I know in my own
7 school, 171 in my district, solar panel should be
8 going online this week. It's 516 solar panels. Half
9 of the energy in those buildings are coming from the
10 solar and I'm really excited about that project, as
11 you can hear. But that was something that the
12 speaker and I were able to put an allocation in. Are
13 we having those conversations around some of that
14 long-hanging fruit that we can get in?

15 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: We'll
16 look into that for certain. I think that's a great
17 idea, um, and equity is really at the center of
18 everything that we do in our office, both from a
19 policy and a programmatic perspective, um, so we'll
20 look into that and I would also say that we're
21 interested in continuing the conversation about
22 making sure that Local Law 97 equitably benefits all
23 buildings regardless of affordability status.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: All right.
25 So moving on to the some of the other things, ah,

1
2 what percentage of methane emissions does the
3 greenhouse city, or the city greenhouse gas inventory
4 report?

5 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Can
6 you?

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You know,
8 what sort of, methane emissions, right, methane
9 release, how much, how much of, of those release is
10 our actual like sort of greenhouse gas emissions
11 overall?

12 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: I'll
13 have to come back to you with that information, but
14 we do capture methane emissions in the inventory.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: We do? OK.
16 Um, let's see, what was the source of 138% increase
17 in fugitive methane emissions compared to 2005?

18 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: I'll
19 have to come back to you on that, apologies.

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: OK. So you
21 already asked, answered this question, um, ah, in
22 addition to buildings, ah, how has city reduction
23 involved other tops of fossil fuel reductions? So
24 beyond just our building sector where are we, where
25

1
2 are we seeking to, to sort of cut down our fossil
3 fuel usage...

4 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Right.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Because we
6 gotta get rid of our addictions. We have to cut it
7 from all sectors.

8 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Yes,
9 thank you. So, ah, Anthony can speak to what we're
10 doing, um, at our, in our city fleets, but, um, you
11 know, to achieve a carbon neutrality transplanted
12 system, for example, ah, we need to reduce our
13 dependence on private vehicles, um, and so we have a
14 commitment to ensuring that by 2050 80% of all trips
15 around the city are sustainable, which means they're
16 made on sidewalks and bikes or by transit, not in
17 private vehicles. Where private vehicles are
18 necessary we're looking to accelerate the deployment
19 of electric vehicles and alternative fuels that are
20 low carbon, um, and so in the short term we're
21 working closely with our partners at DOT to expand
22 electric vehicle charging access throughout the city,
23 laying the groundwork for 20% of new vehicle
24 registrations to be electric by 2025, and I'll turn
25

1
2 it over to my colleague to speak about the city's
3 fleet.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Great, and
5 Anthony if you can add this to it, how are we doing
6 with the installation of the EV infrastructure?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Yeah, OK,
8 thanks for the question. Um, so buildings, as you
9 know, um, are by far the largest contributor to our
10 emissions. Um, but every sector is gonna be
11 important to achieving these deep emission
12 reductions. So we, we have emission reductions in
13 the buildings, we have emission reductions in
14 transplantation, emission reductions in other
15 stationary assets, um, and solid waste. On the, on
16 the transportation side we are looking to have an
17 all-electric fleet by 2040. We will have all
18 alternative fuels by 2021, um, and we currently have
19 over 2000 electric vehicles in our fleet today and
20 we'll have 4000 by 2025. In terms of the electric
21 charging infrastructure, we operate the largest
22 network in New York State, 670 charging units, um,
23 and more every day. We are working on, ah, with DOT
24 to put in, um, charging hubs that will be available
25 not only to city fleet but to the public in each

1
2 borough, um, and we have a partnership with Con Ed
3 for an additional 120 public charging stations, and
4 we're coordinating with Parks to see if we can find
5 available, um, park locations that would also be
6 accessible to the public.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Are we
8 considering, ah, public spots that are only available
9 to EVs?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Um, I'll come
11 back to you on that. I don't know what the, the
12 regulations would, would be around that.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: OK. Um, so
14 let's talk about the grid and, you know, we have
15 pursuant to the reliability requirement imposed by
16 the NYISO, ah, local power plants must be capable of
17 meeting 86% of the city's peak power on demand. Ah,
18 however, you know, we don't have that space, so can,
19 one of our conversations around having that ISO
20 requirement waived or, or sort of working within that
21 requirement to ensure reliability while, you know,
22 getting ourselves off of dirty fossil fuel power
23 plants and cleaning our grid. If, you know, we have,
24 you know, Renewable Riker's and so on, you know, we
25 can get that done, ah, how do we plug in? How do we

1
2 make sure that the ISO approves it, how do we, how do
3 we ensure that there aren't roadblocks that are
4 unintended there?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: I can speak a
6 bit to that, so you're right that our, um, because
7 we're a load-constrained area, meaning we don't have
8 enough transmission, ah, into the city, ah, there's a
9 requirement between 80% and 86%, depending on the
10 year, for in-city generation to meet peak demand.
11 Um, that needs to change. The city's been advocating
12 with, um, not only the New York Independent System
13 Operator but with the Public Service Commission and
14 other state entities to have more transmission built
15 to serve the city. Um, as you're aware, offshore
16 wind is coming to New York...

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Um-hmm.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: And that will
19 be a major improvement. We suspect that at least
20 half of that generation will come directly into the
21 city. Um, that will provide a large benefit. Ah, we
22 continue to work in building out, ah, distributed
23 renewable energy throughout the city, um, and in
24 advocating for more upstate to downstate
25 transmission. So those three things together, um,

1
2 will be necessary in order to reduce the amount of
3 in-city generation that has to be available for peak
4 demand.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And, you
6 know, we're about a year plus away from Indian Point
7 closing. And I have some concerns that I haven't
8 heard a lot of plans from the state yet on how we
9 replace that power that's not from peaker plants
10 burning in environmental justice communities on a, on
11 a more consistent basis, right, 'cause those are the
12 dirtiest plants. Those are the plants that, that
13 release PM 2.5, ah, you know, nitrous oxide, sulfur
14 oxide, all the stuff that gets in people's lungs, and
15 they were all cited 20 years ago in environmental
16 justice neighborhoods. I know in Queens, you've
17 heard me say this before, next to the Queensbridge
18 houses, the Ravenswood houses, and the Astoria
19 houses, and with Indian Point closing, ah, the power
20 would have to come from somewhere and I just don't
21 want it coming from these dirty peaker plants that
22 are just gonna pollute the lungs of the young people
23 in public housing in black and brown communities. So
24 how do we, what are the conversations with the state?
25 What are our thoughts here in the city? Like how are

1 we, I know we're a little slightly off topic, but
2 still in the same sort of spirit, right, now how are
3 sort of thinking about power plant emissions as part
4 of our overall portfolio in the city and how are we
5 thinking that we're going to replace Indian Point in
6 a way that's not just more dirty fossil fuels?
7

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Um, great
9 question. It's a concern of the administration as
10 well. Um, the in-city generators not only are dirty,
11 but they're old, um, and so if they are to be relied
12 on more for longer periods of time that's a concern.
13 Ah, we've seen two new, um, energy generation plants
14 that have been built outside of the city that will
15 provide, um, a large amount of the energy that will
16 no longer come from Indian Point. Um, we're seeing
17 some in-city generators apply for, ah, energy storage
18 projects to replace some of the in-city peaker
19 generation and the state, um, DEC, has new
20 regulations that will limit air emissions from those
21 peaker plants that are likely to close many, many of
22 those plants.

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: The, the
24 concern that I have is that the timelines aren't
25 lining up, though. Ah, they're, they're allowing for

1 some of these, they're sort of changing the
2 regulations on the state level for 2024 and beyond,
3 but Indian Point is gonna go offline in a year plus.
4 So how do we, how are we gonna bridge that gap
5 between 2021 and 2024, ah, where we could potentially
6 see emissions increases, ah, in, again, you know,
7 communities that should not be bearing the brunt of
8 these environmental justice challenges.
9

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Yeah, you're
11 a hundred percent right and it's, we've recognized
12 that gap as well. We continue to advocate to the
13 state, um, to help reduce those, um, those damages,
14 ah, it doesn't right now, there, there is a few years
15 where it looks very likely that emissions, um, will
16 increase before offshore wind comes online, before
17 some generation in-city switches to storage, um, but
18 you're, you're a hundred percent right.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So I, I
20 recognize that Indian Point has to close. And I'm
21 not here advocating that we should be keeping it
22 online longer. I'm just, I'm very concerned about
23 those years and the gaps that we are going to have,
24 ah, in the interim. So I think that's part of this
25 emissions conversation, 'cause we can't, if the city

1
2 is doing everything we can to reduce our carbon
3 footprint from our agencies and from our, we can't be
4 replacing those emissions with fossil fuel-burning
5 plants in our communities. It's, it seems like we're
6 doing a lot of work to end up in the exact same
7 place.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: Yeah, we, we
9 agree. We've recognized that. We continue to
10 advocate to the state to help make changes. I will
11 also mention that as the mayor announced during the
12 State of the City, um, the city is looking to procure
13 100% renewable energy, renewable electricity for the
14 city government portfolio. That will bring in a
15 large amount of renewable energy to the city as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Ah, I want
17 to recognize that one of my colleagues has joined us,
18 Council Member Kalman Yeger of the committee from
19 Brooklyn. Thank you, Council Member Yeger, for being
20 here. I guess my last question, I know financial
21 institutions are coming under growing scrutiny for
22 trillions of dollars of financial support in the form
23 of insurance, lending, investments for the projects
24 and companies responsible for extracting and burning
25 fossil fuels. Many of these institutions provide

1
2 services to the city. Ah, is the city evaluating the
3 carbon footprint of these institutions, including its
4 contracts, with insurance providers, banks, and asset
5 managers?

6 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: So New
7 York City is committed to divesting from fossil fuels
8 and investing in climate solutions. Ah, our
9 colleagues at the Office of the Climate Policy and
10 Programs team recently announced the selection of
11 advisors to evaluate options and recommend divestment
12 actions to three of our five pension boards, making
13 New York City the first city in the nation to take
14 this major and necessary step to address the
15 financial and environmental risks of fossil fuel
16 holdings. Um, the city pension funds are on track to
17 have actionable plans to divest from fossil fuel
18 reserve owners by late 2020 and the expectation is
19 that the pension fund boards will be able to adopt a
20 plan, ah, and begin execution in 2021. In addition
21 to divestment, the fund's goal is to double
22 investments in climate solutions, such as wind, solar
23 power, and energy efficiency, ah, to over four
24 billion dollars by 2021.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So according
3 to the New York City Checkbook, in 2019, FY 2019, the
4 city [inaudible] 30 million in premiums and contracts
5 with insurance providers and brokers to negotiate and
6 provide insurance coverage and invest in coal and gas
7 in projects worldwide. Are we looking at how we're
8 doing business with those insurance providers? I
9 know we're divesting our pension, which is amazing,
10 but are we evaluating how we're spending city dollars
11 and the, and the partnerships or in the companies
12 that we work with, ah, that if, if they don't clean
13 up their act that we're gonna find someone else?

14 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Um,
15 yes, and I'd like to refer you to our colleagues at
16 the Office of Climate Policy and Programs, but we are
17 absolutely committed to, ah, looking at all of the
18 tools at our disposal to tackle the climate crisis.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Great, thank
20 you for that. And I look forward to, I'm gonna pass
21 the, the microphone over to Council Member Brad
22 Lander, who though he is not part of the committee
23 we're glad to have him here today from Brooklyn.
24 Welcome, Council Member Lander, and he has a few
25 questions.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very
3 much, Chair Constantinides, and as always for your
4 leadership on these issues. I'm proud to be a
5 cosponsor of both bills, ah, on the calendar for
6 today. Ah, I guess the question I want to ask, um,
7 ah, relates to sort of thinking about carbon
8 accounting on the risk side, on the sort of exposure
9 side, as well as on the expenditure side. Obviously
10 it's important for us to start thinking about, um,
11 carbon accounting as, ah, as we're spending city
12 dollars what is the impact of it? It seems to me
13 there's also a piece of the accounting here which is
14 thinking what's the city risk exposure to the climate
15 crisis? Because you really want to think about sort
16 of in both, on both sides, you know, as we're
17 thinking about, it, it isn't cheap in some cases to
18 get the city ready to make the resiliency investments
19 that will be necessary. In some cases the kinds of
20 spending that reduce our carbon footprint save money,
21 but in some cases they cost money. So there is a
22 cost that we need to be taking into account. But
23 pretending that there isn't a cost to inaction, ah,
24 is false also. Like our city faces financial risk
25 exposure from the climate crisis and things we can do

1
2 globally to help mitigate and things we can do
3 locally to help prepare need to be kind of evaluated
4 against that. So I wonder, you know, that's a big
5 challenge. I know companies are just starting to do
6 it. Investors are just starting to think about it.
7 But to what extent, if any, is the city starting to
8 think as part of carbon accounting, um, about its,
9 its risk exposure and what the costs will be if we
10 don't take, ah, the actions that we need to.

11 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Um,
12 thank you for that question, Council Member. Um, I
13 think it's a great one and I'd like to take the
14 suggestions back to our colleagues at Mayor's Office
15 of Resiliency and I'd also like to, ah, defer to them
16 and we can come back to you. But, absolutely, we're
17 assessing, ah, the risks posed by climate change.
18 Um, I think that doing even more to, um, advance our
19 transparency and accountability with, with, ah, in
20 those regards would be helpful.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: And, you
22 know, I'll give you one concrete example that gets at
23 just that very point. After Hurricane Sandy, ah, the
24 Department of Environmental Protection did an
25 evaluation of the vulnerability of its wastewater

1 treatment plants and other water infrastructure, and
2 it was that exact kind of analysis, it was what's the
3 cost of doing nothing, what's the cost of putting in
4 temporary, um, measures such as sandbags, what's the
5 cost of putting in more permanent solutions, and they
6 did that evaluation for each of the vulnerable water
7 supply infrastructure, and there were different
8 solutions for different facilities, taking into
9 account both the risk, the cost, and the benefit.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: That's great.

12 And, you know, I think that's the kind of thing we're
13 going to have to start becoming able to do in a lot
14 of new ways even as we think about, you know, what
15 have been traditional maintenance and involvement in
16 infrastructure, you know, thinking, look, you know,
17 at some point the city's gonna have to start thinking
18 about things like managed retreat, and so where are
19 the infrastructure investments that we're making and
20 are they in places that it makes sense and, you know,
21 what's the time horizon on the, the investments that
22 we're making when adjusted for the climate crisis.

23 So I just, I appreciate, you know, a great starting
24 place is this bill which is a more like first step
25 approach to carbon accounting, which is like thinking

1 through the budget what the implications of our
2 expenditures are. So I think it's a good first step.
3 But I, I hope it will also open us up to this longer-
4 term set of ways of thinking. And I guess one other
5 way that I'll just end here is there are the steps we
6 need to take right now because we are facing the
7 urgency that if we aren't part of global action to
8 reduce our carbon footprint the challenge will be,
9 you know, much greater and so there's that piece of
10 it which is urgent. And then there's this other
11 piece of it which is a very long-term, total change
12 to our way of thinking and planning that is gonna be
13 with us for decades to come that's less like what
14 must we do right now to change the ways that we're
15 investing, spending, ah, on the mitigation side and
16 those long-term ways of what's it gonna mean to be
17 being the stewards of a city that for decades to come
18 is facing the consequences of the climate crisis that
19 is coming even with maximal action. So I guess I
20 just want us to think about both sides of those
21 things. How do we use this kind of accounting on
22 these kinds of metrics to drive urgent change and how
23 do we start to make that fundamental long-term shift
24 to being in a city in which the kind of resiliency
25

1
2 and issues in the climate crisis are just gonna be a
3 much, have to be a much higher focus of governing,
4 um, all the time. And so while I appreciate the
5 chair's leadership in the council, like this has to
6 be something we're all doing. It's got to be
7 something that every other committee is thinking
8 about, that in every one of our infrastructure
9 investments and every one of our programmatic
10 decisions we're making central. So thank you for the
11 leadership, ah, honored to be on the bills. Thank
12 you for, for you guys' work. I look forward to
13 continuing the conversation. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,
15 Council Member Lander. I see we've been joined as
16 well by Council Member Eric Ulrich of Queens. Eric,
17 I don't mean to put you on the spot. Do you have any
18 questions before I let the panel go, or?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Not, not yet. I
20 have to review the testimony first. Thank you, thank
21 you Mr. Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: All right,
23 all right, no problem. Sorry about that.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you.
25

1 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Ah, just
2
3 lastly, um, ah, I know that the federal government
4 has delayed approval of congestion pricing. Ah, and
5 if that continues how does this affect our city's
6 greenhouse gas reduction goals?

7 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Ah,
8 thank you. I can't speak to the specifics of how it
9 would impact our greenhouse gas emissions goals, but
10 I can come back to you on those specific numbers.
11 Um, but what we do know and as you pointed out is DOT
12 and the MTA are working with the federal DOT for
13 clarity on what type of environmental review is going
14 to be needed for program approval, whether the
15 lengthy environmental impact statement or an
16 abbreviated environmental assessment. So, yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: In the same
18 vein, I mean, so we have, ah, how will [firk's]
19 rejection of the proposal for new clean energy
20 projects affect our greenhouse gas emissions as well?
21 You know, where is, the federal government seems to
22 be leaving us in a bad place here where they won't
23 act and they're limiting our ability to take the
24 action that we need to do where their failure in
25 leadership exists.

1
2 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: It's,
3 it's a great question, Council Member, and again I'm
4 happy to take those questions back and to report back
5 on, on the impact of this decisions.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FIORE: I'll just add
7 that, um, both the city and the state have
8 recognized, ah, the implications of [firk's] actions,
9 um, the other day and even before [firk] took those
10 actions the state started a proceeding to look at
11 resource adequacy and, ah, who should be controlling
12 that. So there's a proceeding underway now at the
13 state to investigate just that issue.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: OK. I look
15 forward to continuing this conversation. Thank you
16 for your testimony today and with that I'll leave
17 that for next time and have the next panel come up.
18 Thank you.

19 ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CAIRON: Thank
20 you.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And I'm glad
22 to hear that you support our, the spirit of both
23 bills. I look forward to getting both these bills
24 passed. I want to call forward Jenny Veloz from New
25 York for the Public Interest, Phoebe Flaherty from

1
2 Align, Carlos Castel Crow from LCV, ah, Tok, I don't
3 want to get it wrong, I'm sorry, Tok, Oyawily. With
4 a name like Constantinides I do my best to get it
5 right. So from New York City Environmental Justice
6 Alliance Vijay A. All right, so I guess we'll start
7 on this side here. That sounds good?

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: All right,
10 great.

11 PHOEBE FLAHERTY: Um, good morning,
12 thanks for the opportunity to testify. My name is
13 Phoebe Flaherty. I'm an organizer at ALIGN, the
14 Alliance for a Greater New York. Um, we co-
15 coordinate the Climate Works For All Coalition, um,
16 where we work towards reducing emissions, fight
17 climate change through the lens of a just transition.
18 For the past six years the Climate Works For All
19 Coalition has worked to ensure that the city take
20 action to address our greatest source of emissions,
21 large buildings. We worked with Council Member Costa
22 Constantinides and other members of the City Council
23 to pass Local Law 97. Um, the city has made a
24 laudable commitment to lower emissions and with our
25 work to pass Local Law 97 has taken aggressive steps

1
2 to meet those emissions goals. So thank you, Chair
3 Council Member Constantinides for championing Local
4 Law 97 and moving us closer to those goals. However,
5 meeting our broader citywide commitments will require
6 continued effort. This is why we support Council
7 Member Constantinides' Intro 1720, um, and Council
8 Member Richards' Intro 270. Um, the city must
9 account and report on our emissions. This allows us
10 to have insight into which agencies are doing well,
11 where we need to improve, and more concrete
12 information about how we are doing overall in the
13 city with emissions levels. And we must require that
14 city agencies make a proactive plan to reduce
15 emissions based on that important data. Thank you
16 for your leadership on these Intros. Our goal of
17 aggressively and quickly meeting large emissions
18 reductions goals is why we must also invest in the
19 implementation of Local Law 97 by allocating funding
20 in the city budget to retrofits within New York
21 City's public housing. Within Local Law 97 buildings
22 with rent-regulated and portable units, um, were
23 exempted to protect tenants who had faced increased
24 costs from displacement. But it is now time for us
25 to additionally invest in those buildings to meet our

1
2 emissions goals and do so equitably across New York
3 City. In all, the Climate Works For All Coalition is
4 fighting for a budget allocation of a billion dollars
5 annually to retrofit affordable and public housing.
6 Without additional legislation and funding we are in
7 danger of not meeting our emission reductions goals
8 and meeting those goals is crucial to the future of
9 our city and our world. According to the IPCC 2018
10 report we could arrive at irreversible climate change
11 as soon as 2030. We have no time to waste. We are
12 asking the City Council and the mayor support Intro
13 1720 and Intro 270, and also fund retrofits in public
14 and affordable housing in New York City. Funding
15 climate change must be our top priority now and for
16 the coming years before it's too late. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

18 JENNY VELOZ: Thank you, members of
19 Committee on Environmental Protection for convening
20 this hearing. My name is Jenny Veloz and I'm a
21 community organizer in the environmental justice
22 program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.
23 New York is often looked upon to lead the way on
24 climate change. Policies and legislation such as 80-
25 50 and the Climate Leadership and Community

1 Protection Act, which set targets for greenhouse gas
2 emission reductions are the first steps to ensuring
3 that future generations do not continue to bear the
4 brunt of the climate crisis. Thank you to this
5 committee for advance key legislation to advance
6 these goals. Now we need to do more. Now is the
7 time to make those reductions really happen. We can
8 do this by investing in the necessary resources to
9 end our reliance on fossil fuels, increase equity
10 across all communities, especially environmental
11 justice communities, and create jobs. Three key
12 areas of public investment to drive emission
13 reductions are buildings, transportation, and energy.
14 Buildings. Local Law 97 requires that large
15 buildings over 25,000 square feet reduce greenhouse
16 gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and by 80% by 2050.
17 However, in order to protect tenants and maintain
18 housing affordability buildings with rent-stabilized
19 units were exempted from the law. We must not
20 disregard the aging housing stock in New York City,
21 especially rent-stabilized and NYCHA buildings that
22 are in dire need of repair and maintenance and will
23 continue to place an energy burden on residents. To
24 reach the 80-50 goal, maintain housing affordability,

1 and create green jobs the city should put money into
2 a climate and community development fund to finance
3 energy efficiency upgrades in rent-stabilized
4 buildings. Energy efficiency will lessen energy
5 costs for low-income residents, reducing the energy
6 burden they continue to face. Transportation. While
7 Mayor de Blasio recent executive order mandates
8 transition of all city fleets to an all-electric
9 fleet, the order does not mandate transition to all-
10 electric of contracted fleets like school buses. I
11 have testified at previous hearings about the
12 importance of passing Intro 455 which would require
13 transitioning the city school bus fleet of over 9000
14 buses to all-electric vehicles. The impact of this
15 bill cannot be understated. Low-income communities
16 and communities of color are adversely affected by
17 hundreds of diesel buses driving to and from schools
18 in their neighborhoods. Students, especially special
19 education students, continue to breathe harmful toxic
20 fumes from riding for hours on these diesel gas
21 school buses. Investment in electric school buses
22 must happen if we are serious about reducing
23 emissions for all vehicles. Energy. Finally, we
24 need to invest in creative ways to support local
25

1
2 renewable energy sources. One such example is the
3 Renewable Riker's Act, which would transfer ownership
4 of Riker's Island to DEP, explore ways in which the
5 island can be used for solar and energy storage
6 capabilities, and create green infrastructures.

7 Local renewable energy generation on Riker's Island
8 can help close down peaker plants in environmental
9 justice communities which burn harmful pollutants at
10 the peak of high energy demand and create more green
11 space for communities. The city has made initial
12 progress in installing some solar and energy storage
13 on schools and public buildings. These efforts and
14 other creative ways of leveraging city resources to
15 support local and community-owned energy generation
16 will also help communities by lowering utility bills,
17 introducing new forms of decreasing, of energy,
18 decreasing the burden on the electrical grid, and
19 investing in people by providing training and jobs in
20 a newly created green job sector. We need to stop
21 paying lip service to climate change and start
22 putting in the work to achieve our goals. We need to
23 start investing the money, starting with the Climate
24 and Community Development Fund to prove our

1
2 seriousness in fighting climate change and to leave
3 future generations a city that they can be proud of.

4 TOK OYAWILY: Hello. Thank you for
5 convening this hearing and for the opportunity to
6 speak today. My name is Tok Oyawily and I'm here to
7 testify on behalf of the New York City Environmental
8 Justice Alliance, a citywide network of grassroots
9 groups serving communities on the front lines of
10 climate change and the, um, testimony I'm reading is
11 shorter than the one that I handed off.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Um-hmm.

13 TOK OYAWILY: Equitable implementation of
14 long-term emissions plans. Generally, the New York
15 City Environmental Justice Alliance is supportive of
16 the intention of both Intro 270 and Intro 1720.
17 Long-term emissions plans for the city agencies must
18 take into account equity and environmental justice.
19 While New York City has made commitments to reduce
20 carbon emissions and increase investments in climate
21 resiliency, progress so far has been slow to reach
22 low-income communities and communities of color.
23 Concerns about carbon neutrality and offsets. We
24 agree that carbon accounting should be a priority in
25 the annual executive budget. However, [nija] has

1 strong concerns about the efficiency and equity of
2 mechanisms that been proposed to achieve carbon
3 neutrality, including cap and trade offsets and other
4 carbon trading mechanisms in both lowering total
5 emissions and protecting environmental justice
6 communities from carrying the burden of fossil fuels.
7 A carbon neutrality economy may create loopholes that
8 set back New York City's efforts to address climate
9 change, including carbon offsets that may not
10 actually result in a net decrease in air pollution.
11 A recent study on the California offset program shows
12 they may have overstated their emissions reductions
13 by 80 million tons of carbon dioxide, a third of the
14 total cuts that the state's cap and trade program was
15 expected to achieve in the next decade. Relying on
16 carbon offsets to achieve our emissions reductions
17 can perpetuate the disproportionate pollution impacts
18 on communities of color in New York City. A polluter
19 could invest in reforestation hundreds of miles or
20 even a continent away to offset the carbon they
21 release into the atmosphere while doing nothing to
22 alleviate the root cause of asthma attacks, lung
23 disease, and other harms facing New York City's
24 environmental justice communities. Concerns about
25

1 renewable energy credits. Monitoring and enforcing
2 energy efficiency targets should be an essential part
3 of the city's long-term emissions planning. [nija]
4 has concerns about potential trading schemes and
5 alternative compliance mechanisms that may inhibit
6 these goals. We are particularly concerned that
7 Local Law 97 of 2019, the energy efficiency mandate
8 for large buildings, allows building owners to use an
9 unlimited number of renewable energy credits as a
10 means for compliance, which may allow for continued
11 localized emissions while purchasing in renewable
12 energy that may be sited outside of city limits.
13 Concerns about energy efficiency trading scheme. We
14 are also concerned about the upcoming energy
15 efficiency trading scheme as a part of Local Law 97.
16 We fear that if applied to the energy efficiency
17 goals for New York City the largest and most
18 polluting building owners will be able to avoid
19 making necessary improvements to their own buildings
20 by making minor investments in rent-regulated and
21 underserved buildings. Instead the Climate Works For
22 All Coalition has developed a proposed billion-dollar
23 budget ask that includes support for energy
24 efficiency upgrades for affordable housing and LMI
25

1
2 homeowners and tenants. Direct financial support
3 will guarantee that disadvantaged communities
4 actually benefit from energy efficiency investments,
5 whereas a trading scheme is untested and unreliable.
6 Concerns about Canadian Hydro. Finally, we are
7 concerned that the city's commitment to 100% clean
8 energy by 2050 relies largely on importing hydropower
9 from Quebec. The nearest, the nearly 20 billion
10 dollar project would lock New York City into long-
11 term dependence on Canadian hydropower while
12 inhibiting local offshore wind, solar, and other
13 renewable industries from developing. A recent study
14 also shows that the city's sourcing of hydropower may
15 actually increase overall state carbon emissions by
16 drawing hydropower away from other parts of the state
17 that currently source from Hydro Quebec and would
18 consequently have to switch to fossil fuel power.
19 Thank you for the opportunity to raise these
20 concerns. We encourage the city to develop long-term
21 emissions plans for agencies that meaningfully and
22 equitably drive down greenhouse gas emissions without
23 giving in to false solutions.

24 CARLOS CASTEL CROAK: Good morning. My
25 name is Carlos Castel Croak and I'm a representative

1 from the New York League of Conservation Voters.
2 NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New York City
3 and we are committed to advancing a sustainability
4 agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods,
5 and our economy healthier and more resilient. I
6 would like to thank Chair Constantinides for the
7 opportunity to testify before the Committee on
8 Environmental Protection. New York City has set
9 forth aggressive and groundbreaking climate goals,
10 including an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas
11 emissions by 2050 and zero waste to landfills by
12 2030. Achieving these goals is essential in order to
13 do our part to combat climate change. The state's
14 recent adoption of the Climate Leadership and
15 Community Protection Act also requires us to do more
16 and continue our climate leadership, especially at
17 this time when Washington is moving backwards. To
18 help reach these goals NYLCV supports Intro 1720,
19 which would require each city agency and affiliated
20 governmental organization to develop a climate
21 emissions plan on an annual basis. The goals that we
22 have set of ourselves are monumental, to such an
23 extent that it can be difficult to imagine, let alone
24 execute each of the thousands of steps we will have
25

1 to take along the way. In fact, New York City has
2 struggled to make progress and we are not currently
3 on track to meet most of the climate-related goals
4 that laid out in statute. Requiring city agencies
5 and affiliated governmental organizations to develop
6 individual climate plans that are in keeping with the
7 city's broader plans should help get the city back on
8 track by focusing on those small steps that add up to
9 real forward movement. Furthermore, city agencies
10 should be an example for the rest of the city,
11 setting out best practices that can be adopted by the
12 private sector and other local state and federal
13 government entities. Similarly, Intro 270 seeks to
14 embed the city's climate goals in its budget.

15 Processed by our budget process by requiring each
16 unit of appropriation in the budget to account for
17 its carbon emissions offsets, mitigations, and net
18 impacts. NYLCV supports the goal of aligning the
19 city's budget with its climate goals and thinking
20 more carefully about the carbon impact of various
21 types of agency spending. However, calculating the
22 carbon impact of each unit of appropriation in the
23 budget would be a herculean task, in all likelihood
24 requiring the addition of many new staff for the
25

1
2 Office of Management and Budget who are trained in
3 carbon accounting. The temptation to cut corners in
4 producing this analysis would be very strong and
5 sloppy carbon accounting is less useful to policy
6 makers and the public than none at all. Intro 270
7 would be more effective if it required carbon
8 accounting at the agency level, where the impact of
9 the entire city budget aggregated from the agency
10 level emissions offsets mitigations and event
11 impacts. In order to reach the city's 80 by 50 and
12 zero waste goals we must have a better understanding
13 of the progress we are making, or not making, so that
14 we can learn from mistakes, replicate best practices,
15 and readjust strategy as we go. Thank you for
16 holding this hearing and taking seriously the details
17 of how New York City achieves its climate goals.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So I know
19 that you brought up the issue of the school buses.
20 Ah, this is something that I am equally passionate
21 about and I just wanted to, you know, everyone at
22 this table has been, has talked about the school bus
23 bill 455 for quite some time. I'll just reiterate my
24 support for that bill and desire of, ah, you know, my
25 office and, and sort of this committee to try to get

1 that done. So I know that that's something that each
2 of you care about very much. And how do you sort of
3 think about what we're doing when it comes to
4 renewable energy for building retrofits in
5 environmental justice communities? Ah, you know, I
6 think that's, we're, we just talked about earlier and
7 I think this is probably like a two-part question,
8 right, but there is, we have Indian Point closing.
9 You have these power plants that are going to
10 potentially possibly be on longer that are polluting.
11 But then also as a city we need to reduce emissions
12 from our city buildings, from our transportation
13 sector, create more renewable energy in, in these
14 same communities. What, what else can we do, and I
15 think some of that I know the answer to because it
16 was in your testimony today, but if we can flesh that
17 out as a conversation.

19 PHOEBE FLAHERTY: Yeah, I think with the
20 Climate Works For All Coalition we're, you know,
21 working on creating solutions that address that there
22 is a need and you know this the perspective that
23 [nija] is bringing as well to this conversation.
24 But, you know, just because the building stock is
25 smaller in environmental justice communities does not

1 mean that we can neglect the needs of environmental
2 justice communities when it comes to retrofits and,
3 ah, can we think of creative solutions to really get
4 in those neighborhoods and make sure that the equity
5 of retrofits that is happening around New York City
6 is being spread equitability across the city and not
7 just in certain like more affluent neighborhoods as
8 well.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Because, I
11 mean, I support the Climate Works For All plan, ah,
12 and I think I've, I've stood with you at the rally
13 and on the steps. I know how important this to make
14 these investments and I, I really believe that this
15 year should be the year of the climate budget. Ah,
16 both in legislation that we're introducing today but
17 also the actual dollars that we're allocating, ah,
18 into the budget on a yearly basis that this is our
19 moment to utilize it and to ensure that we're getting
20 where we need to go. Ah, so, and with that, and sort
21 of what are your comments on, on, you know, we've
22 talked about a lot of things today, but around the
23 issues relating to, ah, the federal government not
24 being our partner when it comes to congestion
25 pricing, when it comes to clean power generation, ah,

1
2 you know, sort of, you know, we need to kind of push
3 forward. If there are other things that you think we
4 can be doing that can sort of help us reduce our
5 emissions. And I know I put you all on the spot
6 [laughs]. 'Cause I'm thinking about these things,
7 too, right? I think we need to have a, a sort of
8 next step conversation and I look forward to it. You
9 know, those rent-regulated buildings and NYCHA, as
10 you heard, I said, you know, we need to find ways to
11 bring NYCHA in to these conversations and we
12 recognize the shortcomings from the federal
13 government and the state government in funding and,
14 but we can't leave them out. We can't say that we,
15 we set a goal but we missed it because of that. You
16 know, the residents there deserve more than us
17 missing, just setting a goal. So I, I agree with you
18 and I look forward to partnering with you on that.
19 Thank you so much, guys. Next, next panel. Archie
20 Kinane, ah, Richard Rice from City Atlas, Lisa
21 Harrison from Save, ah, Sane Energy Project, Marisa
22 Guerrero from National Resources Defense Council, ah,
23 Michael Laurer from New Yorkers for Affordable
24 Energy, and Michael Howard from the Sunrise Movement/
25 Vocal NYC. All righty. So, ah, we started on this

1
2 end last time. Ah, we're gonna start at this end, so
3 everybody, if you have your testimony to submit to
4 the Sergeant at Arms fantastic. I think they're
5 going through it now. So you can go ahead.

6 MICHAEL LAURER: OK. Good morning, Mr.
7 Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
8 My group, New Yorkers for Affordable Energy, is
9 dedicated to supporting access to cleaner, reliable,
10 and affordable sources of energy for resident and
11 business consumers. We're a coalition of organized
12 labor, business, and community leaders. Our key
13 message to you today is that we think the city's goal
14 of reducing emissions represents an extraordinary
15 amount of ambitious thinking. But how much renewable
16 energy will really be developed by 2040, just 19
17 years from now? Furthermore, any realistic plan to
18 reduce emissions must include infrastructure for
19 delivering natural gas. A recent study by the
20 Environmental Defense Fund supported the conclusion
21 that there is a natural gas supply problem in New
22 York City and the suburbs. Their data demonstrates
23 that the supply constraints, and they, and there are
24 pipeline constraints, are causing adverse
25 environmental impacts. It's also clear with the

1
2 issuance of a recent executive order that the mayor
3 has given zero thought to how much this policy will
4 really cost New Yorkers or how it would make our
5 housing crisis even worse. In short, for reasons
6 I'll explain more fully in a moment, we think it is
7 bad economic policy, bad housing policy, and an
8 environmental policy that's based on hopes and not
9 reality. I'd like to make three key points. No one
10 knows how much it will cost to heat buildings with
11 electricity in 2040 or how well that would even work,
12 especially in winter. If you require electric heat
13 that's way more expensive to install and operate than
14 proven natural gas systems you're going to drive up
15 rents and energy costs. You're going to make our
16 affordable housing crisis even worse in New York
17 City. The mayor went ahead and announced an extreme
18 mandate, ah, mandatory policy while three major
19 feasibility studies have yet to be completed for your
20 consideration. One study about the engineering and
21 fiscal challenges of electrification, another about
22 how the electric grid's needs, ah, needs to be
23 upgraded. And a third is about our city's need for
24 new natural gas infrastructure. Racing ahead and
25 jamming through this policy before your studies are

1 even done is classic ready, fire, aim, some even may
2 say is irresponsible. Finally, we would suggest you
3 consider the situation at NYCHA. Over the last
4 decade the housing authority has spent millions to
5 convert old, failing, dirty, oil heat systems to
6 clean burning and much less expensive natural gas.
7 The mayor's executive order may force the authority
8 to delay upgrading these systems, which are essential
9 for NYCHA residents. Now, bear in mind today only
10 30% of New York's electricity comes from renewables
11 and 25% of that 30% comes from hydroelectric dams.
12 Getting from 30% to 100% renewable by 2040 just for
13 the energy we consume is a massive undertaking. The
14 simple fact is that New Yorkers rely on natural gas.
15 60% of New York households heat with natural gas and
16 40% of our electricity comes from power plants that
17 run on natural gas, according to the US Energy
18 Information Administration. Whether New Yorkers heat
19 their homes in the winter or power their air
20 conditioners in the summer, natural gas is fueling
21 their everyday lives. Additionally, according to the
22 Western Energy Alliance natural gas is the number one
23 reason that the United States has reduced greenhouse
24 gas emissions more than any other question. The
25

1 shift from dirtier burning fuels like coal to natural
2 gas has produced 57% more carbon emission reductions
3 than have all of the renewable energy sources that
4 have come on line since 2005, according to the most
5 recent EIA data. When Indian Point, as you rightly
6 mentioned, shuts down next year New York will need
7 even more natural gas for power plants to fill the
8 gap. Also, the more New York moves to intermittent
9 renewable energy sources like wind and solar the more
10 vital it will be to have natural gas power plants
11 online and available to cycle up as quickly as the
12 wind stops blowing or the sun goes behind a cloud.
13 The truth is natural gas is the only source of energy
14 that can fully and reliably meet the needs of New
15 Yorkers and do so without increasing energy costs to
16 homeowners and businesses or increasing the cost of
17 new construction to alleviate New York's affordable
18 housing problem. The city's goal of converting every
19 gasoline and diesel powered car and truck in New York
20 to electric and converting every building and home in
21 New York now heated by oil or gas to electricity will
22 require massive investments and years of
23 infrastructure upgrades. Getting enough wind power
24 and solar and other renewables built to cover all of
25

1 that by 2040 will be incredibly challenging and very
2 likely impossible. If we could affordably live off
3 nothing but renewable energy in New York in 2040 I
4 think we would all agree it would be ideal and it is
5 a dream to aspire to. But if you look at where we
6 are now, locking that in as a binding mandate today
7 is an incredibly dangerous policy. We don't know if
8 we can even do it. We have no idea how much it would
9 cost, and we have no idea what that would do to our
10 housing crisis and the cost of construction. We
11 haven't even finished asking and answering those
12 questions. We are prepared to work with you on
13 developing a clean fuel future across the globe, but
14 urge all engaged to be realistic on how this can be
15 best accomplished. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Just a
18 question. How much money do you guys take from the
19 American Petroleum Institute?

20 MICHAEL LAURER: From API?

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yes.

22 MICHAEL LAURER: They are involved in the
23 coalition.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: How much?

25 MICHAEL LAURER: I can't speak to...

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Is it 60%?

3 MICHAEL LAURER: 16?

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Sixty, six
5 zero.

6 MICHAEL LAURER: No.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: It's not
8 anywhere near that number.

9 MICHAEL LAURER: No, not...

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So the US,
11 US Today, USA Today is wrong?

12 MICHAEL LAURER: Can you refer me to the
13 article?

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: There's an
15 article. Sadly, I have lousy service in here. But
16 it's a pretty large number.

17 MICHAEL LAURER: If you can refer me to
18 the article.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Great.

20 MICHAEL LAURER: If you can refer me to
21 the article I'd be happy to look at it. They are a
22 part of the coalition.

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: If they'd
24 like to come to my hearing I'd love to have them
25 back. I enjoyed having them here last time.

2 MICHAEL LAURER: OK.

3 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: [laughs] Let
4 them know I said [inaudible].

5 MICHAEL LAURER: I will [inaudible], I
6 will convey the message.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
8 very much.

9 MICHAEL LAURER: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Moving on.

11 RICHARD REESE: Thank you, Councilman
12 Constantinides. I edit a project called City Atlas
13 based at the Institute for Sustainable Cities. Today
14 I'm speaking on my own behalf. Ah, we, we support, I
15 can say that we support these bills. It's important,
16 ah, that the city has more accurate accounting of all
17 the emissions and has as ambitious goals as possible
18 at this point, um, and so the leadership and the
19 leadership of the City Council is really crucial.
20 Um, I wanted just briefly today and my written
21 testimony kind of spells out what we're thinking, but
22 I'll show some examples to show the scale of the
23 challenge, but I think part of it is this
24 conversation that we're having in this room today has
25 to be replicated across the city because most people

1
2 in New York are not yet directly engaged with this
3 issue. So just as a reminder of what the C40 cities
4 calls the 2020 challenge, this is the rate of
5 emission reductions that are committed to for the 1.5
6 C target. It's like a ski slope. It's like a very
7 challenge Olympic ski slope. Ah, New York is, is in
8 the highest category of, of emissions for a city.
9 These are other cities around the world that each
10 have their own targets. Um, and that's an equity
11 problem. But, I mean, for us also because we have to
12 protect our own city and the way we do that is by
13 cutting emissions. And within New York City
14 emissions are an equity issue because there's such a
15 wide disparity in the amount of emissions people
16 produce. So the, the top 10% in the US averages
17 about 50 tons of individual emissions. Ah, the
18 bottom 50% averages below 10 tons. So that's, that's
19 an enormous disparity and that's, that's largely
20 gonna hold true in New York. So if you have 10 New
21 Yorkers, nine of them will average about 10 tons and
22 one of them will average around 50 tons. So we need
23 to find a way to engage people across the city. The
24 top 10% of the city is about 860,000 people and I
25 think they're, they're mostly well intentioned,

1 they're well educated. But no one really, and I
2 include, you know, really the world I come from, most
3 of my friends, has yet fully engaged with this issue
4 in terms of their own life. In a sense everybody's
5 sort of living as we've always lived. We haven't
6 started to adjust and, ah, that has to happen, that
7 has to happen fairly fast because of [inaudible].
8 Um, the last, the last chart I have here shows that
9 this conversation is actually picking up speed in
10 Europe so Greta Thunberg of course is now a, a
11 worldwide recognized figure and she sort of
12 exemplifies that idea of, of understanding how
13 rapidly we need to change how we live our lives, you
14 know, how we think about this as an overall issue,
15 and what we specifically follow in a more practical,
16 immediate level is, ah, cities in other, cities in
17 other places and nations that are starting to take
18 this into account, so Paris and Barcelona both have
19 programs to educate the public. Finland has a
20 national program. I'll just quickly show this,
21 because this is, the UK is having a, a citizens'
22 assembly right now and the discussion there is
23 getting as far as showing what it actually takes to
24 achieve the Paris goals if you don't have new
25

1 technology to make it easier and it's, the one thing
2 I'll point out here is this shows air travel and the,
3 this is actually from Cambridge University and it
4 just ramps down air travel to the point that you're
5 closing the airports until you can after 2050 develop
6 technology that allows you to return to air travel.
7 So these are enormous shifts in the way we live our
8 lives. Um, but there's very little time to work out
9 how we negotiate, ah, you know, making these changes.
10 Ah, so we'll put, I'll put, you know, the written
11 testimony we have online. You can follow City Atlas
12 on Twitter. It's @cityatlas. And now I'll turn it
13 over to someone who works with us, Archie.

14
15 ARCHIE KINANE: Thank you, thank you for
16 having me. Um, my name is Archie Kinane. I'm 23
17 years old and I live in Brooklyn, and I work with
18 Richard on City Atlas and I'm also involved with
19 Extinction Rebellion NYC, but today I'm just here
20 representing myself. Um, first I just want to say
21 that I, I appreciate everything this committee and
22 Council Member Constantinides and staff have done
23 and, ah, the buildings law was fantastic and the
24 bills today are great as well and I fully and
25 enthusiastically support them. Um, I'm here to talk

1
2 about citizens' assemblies, which Richard mentioned
3 briefly and, ah, this is a concept that is starting
4 to be adopted all over the world and I bring it up
5 today because I think it's a powerful idea that might
6 help the city do even more to decarbonize and prepare
7 New Yorkers for the future and could help New York
8 City become a model for reengaging people with a
9 democratic process and, ah, restoring faith in
10 government. Um, so a citizens' assembly is a type of
11 democratic process that brings together people from
12 all walks of life into one room to learn, ah,
13 discuss, and deliberate on a topic, usually during
14 several weekend sessions and then based on that
15 provide recommendations to their government. And so
16 Richard mentioned the UK. I'll briefly describe
17 what's going on there as kind of a model for what
18 something like this could look like in New York. Um,
19 Climate Assembly UK was convened by six parliamentary
20 committees in June of last year. Um, a group of 110
21 people was chosen by civic lottery so that they
22 represent the wider population. Um, this group is
23 being brought together for eight sessions across four
24 weekends to learn from a balanced group of experts,
25 um, about climate change and, and how the UK can

1 address it, ah, take time to discuss with one
2 another, and then make recommendations about what
3 should happen, ah, which will be submitted to
4 Parliament to form the basis of how the public wants
5 to address the climate crisis and end emissions.
6 There are also over a dozen municipalities hosting
7 their own local assemblies and France is having a
8 national citizens' assembly as well. So through the
9 organizations I, I mentioned being a part of before
10 I've gotten to have contact with, um, the people
11 running these, many of these citizens' assemblies and
12 I've learned a lot about them and I think they seem
13 like a really good idea, so I wanted to come in and
14 testify about them. Um, so first I'll talk about why
15 I think so in, in a practical sense. Um, first a
16 citizens' assembly lets us know exactly what people
17 want, don't want, and would prefer without policy
18 makers having to guess for them. Um, decarbonization
19 is all about choices. Like Richard kind of showed,
20 um, it's, it's about what we're willing to do and,
21 and how quickly we're willing to do it. Um, the
22 science tells us we have to act fast but it can be
23 kind of difficult to predict what policies might
24 enjoy, ah, support from the majority of the
25

1 population. And, as it turns out, these assemblies
2 have revealed a much, much broader appetite for
3 aggressive climate action than is usually assumed by
4 conventional political mental models. Um, when you
5 let people sit with this information and then you ask
6 them what we should do, almost invariably they want
7 their government to do more, and I can pass along
8 reports, articles, and interviews with participants
9 that show this. Um, second, people are more likely
10 to trust a program or a process that has been
11 developed with citizen involvement because of that
12 citizen involvement. The citizen participation gives
13 legitimacy to the solutions offered. And third, in
14 any large program that involves, ah, changing society
15 and changing the way we live our lives, active public
16 consent is critical, ah, and we have, we must act now
17 to embed it in these sort of bureaucratic processes
18 so we can speed up this process of implementing
19 environmental politics, everything from building
20 solar farms and transmission lines to creating more
21 resilient coastline. Um, so I've said a little bit
22 about why I think citizens' assemblies, um, can be a
23 practical tool for effective governance, but I also
24 want to briefly talk about why I consider opening up
25

1 more involvement to be a moral issue. Um, just this
2 week news broke that JP Morgan analysts are warning
3 their clients that there exists the threat of the
4 collapse of citizen and the, quote, end of human life
5 as we know it, whatever that means [laughs]. And
6 that's just the latest example of something that
7 sounds like hyperbole coming from very serious
8 sources. I fear that I'm, I'm seeing people I care
9 about be set up for failure because we're pretending
10 things will fundamentally stay the same when we know
11 that they won't. Um, and like Richard mentioned,
12 there's extreme disparity in emissions. There's also
13 extreme disparity in impacts and I'm fully aware that
14 I'm one of the lucky ones, and I think it's important
15 for those of us who are to recognize that. So no
16 matter what the future is going to be very different
17 and as our city continues and accelerates the task of
18 mitigating emissions while increasing resiliency we
19 need to amplify the voices of communities who have
20 borne the brunt of climate impacts and ensure
21 equitable involvement in the political process for us
22 all. And as these impacts worsen cooperation will
23 not get easier, so I think we need to invest in
24 community involvement now. Um, I know that several
25

1 council members, um, including Council Member Lander,
2 who was here earlier and, and probably others, um,
3 have championed participatory...
4

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I do, too.

6 [laughs]

7 ARCHIE KINANE: [laughs] And Council
8 Member Constantinides, thank you, have championed
9 participatory budgeting which I think is, ah,
10 fantastic and I think a citizens' assembly could be
11 the next step in making, um, a government that works
12 well for, for all. Um, like I mentioned, we're in
13 touch with the people running these. They want to
14 help us get started and we'd love to connect you with
15 them if you'd like to explore this idea.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I, as I've
17 said before, I'm interested in...

18 ARCHIE KINANE: Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...doing
20 citizens' assemblies in, in my own council district.
21 I think it's a matter of how do we get more than just
22 one.

23 ARCHIE KINANE: Exactly.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Like more
25 than one council district, how do we engage on a

1
2 citywide educational project and educate, and a
3 citizens' assembly that represents all levels of, you
4 know, of economic status in our, in our city that
5 we're engaging with. You know, the families that,
6 that are, you know, working hard to keep food on the
7 table but they're the one, their family is gonna be
8 the most impacted. How do we make sure that they
9 are, that they are constantly part of that
10 conversation at these assemblies and we do it in a
11 way that allows for them to be part of it?

12 ARCHIE KINANE: I absolutely agree.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So I'm, I'm
14 committed to working that out with you guys.

15 ARCHIE KINANE: Thank you, thank you very
16 much for your time and, again, for all that you do.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

18 OK.

19 MARISA GUERRERO: Good morning, Chairman
20 Constantinides and committee members. My name is
21 Marisa Guerrero and I work at the National Resources
22 Defense Council. Thank you for the opportunity to
23 speak here today about these important bills that
24 would help New York City better track its greenhouse
25 gas emissions. As you may know, NRDC is an

1 international nonprofit legal and scientific
2 environmental organization headquartered in New York
3 City. On behalf of NRDC I thank the City Council for
4 considering Intros 270 and 1720, which will help to
5 ensure that New York City adheres to the critical
6 climate goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.
7 Cities occupy only 2% of the world's land mass but
8 account for more than 70% of the greenhouse gas
9 emissions that cause climate change. Such a large
10 contribution to emissions means that cities play an
11 important role in the fight to reduce our carbon
12 footprint across the globe. As the most populous
13 city in the nation and the country's media and
14 financial center New York is uniquely positioned to
15 build upon its leadership role on climate. Though
16 our per capita emissions are the lowest of any big
17 city in the country and among the lowest in the
18 world, the sheer mass of our emissions is still
19 staggering. New York produced 52 million metric tons
20 of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2015. While that
21 number has been in decline and New York has made
22 starts on fighting climate change we need to do that
23 we can to make sure we are on track to meet our 2050
24 goal. In large part due to the production and
25

1 combustion of fossil fuels New Yorkers already suffer
2 from the harmful effects of climate change. Every
3 year heat waves kill 13 people and hospitalize 400
4 more, almost entirely in environmental justice
5 communities. Rising sea levels erode our beloved
6 beaches like the Rockaways. Flooding and extreme
7 weather events like Superstorm Sandy are more likely
8 and more frequent. New York City is especially
9 vulnerable to climate change impacts because it is
10 situated on one of the largest natural harbors in the
11 world and its coastline is extensive. Climate
12 threats affect all New Yorkers but disproportionately
13 harm environmental justice communities who face
14 heightened exposure to pollution and environmental
15 hazards. For example, they are especially vulnerable
16 to the hotter temperatures caused by the urban heat
17 island effect, which causes higher daytime
18 temperatures and less nighttime cooling. Once
19 exposed, they generally have fewer economic resources
20 to prepare for and recover from climate hazards. In
21 the extreme heat example low-income residents are
22 less likely to have functioning air conditioners, the
23 absence of which is linked to heat-related deaths.
24 And they experience cumulative negative health
25

1 effects when exposed to these harmful environmental
2 health and/or economic conditions. The City Council
3 is already a leader in ambitious climate action from
4 the greener greater buildings legislation in 2009 to
5 the climate mobilization act adopted last year, as
6 well as many other laws that reduce energy
7 consumption and increase the deployment of renewables
8 and clean transportation. But we can and must do
9 even more to ensure a livable city for present and
10 future generations. Intros 270 and 1720, especially
11 when taken together mark another important step
12 towards reducing our carbon footprint. If passed
13 they would help the city understand the climate
14 implications of its proposed budget and better track
15 emissions to curtail them. They also fall in line
16 with the goals of the New York City Panel on Climate
17 Change 2019 report to develop methods to assess
18 climate risk and implement region-wide resilience.
19 We encourage the city to go even further to include
20 20-year global warming potentials for methane and
21 upstream gas leaks, in keeping with state policy
22 under the climate leadership and community protection
23 act. In short, these bills would build upon New
24 York's strong leadership on climate and would help
25

1
2 the city better account for and reduce its greenhouse
3 gas emissions, thereby prioritizing justice for New
4 York City residents, especially communities on the
5 front lines of climate hazards. And these bills can
6 serve as a model for other cities looking to level up
7 their climate ambition. We look forward, their
8 climate ambition. For these reasons NRDC supports
9 the proposed legislation. We look forward to
10 continuing to work with the council and the
11 administration in the fight against climate change.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

14 How are you?

15 LISA HARRISON: Hi, I'm Lisa Harrison.

16 I'm a member of Sane Energy Core Team and I'm
17 testifying today on behalf of Sane Energy Project.
18 We're so grateful to the leadership of the New York
19 City Council. Thank you for hosting this hearing
20 today and we thank you for your valiant efforts to
21 address climate change as the crisis it is in our
22 beloved waterfront city. Sane Energy Project
23 represents nearly 9000 New Yorkers working for the
24 past decade towards halting fossil fuels and moving
25 our economy to 100% community-owned and led

1
2 renewables. We support the Intro bills proposed
3 today that will give additional solid infrastructure
4 for a desperately needed clear plan to 100% renewable
5 energy for New York City. In addition, we have the
6 following recommendations. Intro 1720 states no
7 later than January 15, 2020, and no later than every
8 January 15 thereafter the Office of Long-Term
9 Planning and Sustainability or other agencies or
10 office as the mayor shall designate shall develop for
11 each mayoral agency and for each affiliated
12 governmental organization a climate initiative plan
13 projection annually and concurrent with the fiscal
14 budgeting process. Intro 270 states the terms carbon
15 dioxide equivalent and CO₂e mean the quantity of
16 carbon dioxide gas expressed in metric tons that
17 would have the same GWP, or global warming potential,
18 when measured over a time scale of a hundred years as
19 a given quantity of a greenhouse gas. The term
20 carbon emissions means greenhouse gas emissions from
21 any source as expressed in CO₂e. Since April of 2019
22 Sane Energy Project has been parties to both utility
23 rate cases that served New York City, Con Edison and
24 National Grid. Other parties to the rate case
25 include the Office of Recovery and Resilience and

1
2 Energy Policy Advisors to New York as well as Couch
3 White, the legal representation of the City of New
4 York. We recommend that you consider including these
5 offices to work together and get on the same on the
6 same page when making climate emission plans. We
7 recommend that you urge the mayor to tell the City of
8 New York to pull their support for the current
9 National Grid rate case. We recommend that you urge
10 all greenhouse gas emissions measurements to include
11 a methane measurement using a 20-year timeframe.
12 These are some of our concerns. Sane Energy Project
13 filed testimony with copies to all parties that
14 include the City of New York in both rate cases,
15 outlining the dangers of methane, the main component
16 of fracked gas that is currently being expanded in
17 all five boroughs using our rate payer dollars. Sane
18 Energy Project stated in our testimony to Con Edison
19 on May 24, 2019, the company primarily bases its
20 claims of reducing greenhouse gas emissions on the
21 fact that when burned gas emits less CO2 than oil,
22 but ignores the upstream and downstream methane
23 leakage. In doing so they are presenting an
24 incomplete and misleading representation of
25 greenhouse gas emissions associated with their

1 projects and their environmental impact.

2 Additionally, they, when talking about reducing

3 greenhouse gas emissions the company proposes

4 projects to reduce methane leaks within their systems

5 while at the same time expanding gas capacity and

6 dependence through new and enhanced pipelines and

7 investing funds in LNG storage. Expanding gas

8 capacity will lead to more fracking and fracking

9 infrastructure needed to transport the gas, thus

10 increasing overall methane emissions. We filed

11 similar testimony and supplemental testimony in the

12 National Grid rate case since both corporate

13 utilities ask for astronomical rate hikes for New

14 Yorkers to expand fracked gas infrastructure that

15 continues to keep business as usual, filling

16 shareholders' pockets on New Yorkers' dime with

17 knowingly harming the planet. Sane Energy recently

18 confirmed on the record that National Grid is using

19 an outdated, one-hundred-year global warming

20 potential of methane measurement plan, when climate

21 science says that methane warms our atmosphere over

22 86 times faster than carbon dioxide in a 20-year

23 global warming potential methane measurement plan.

24 Quotes from the transcript from February 10, 2020,

25

1 National Grid evidentiary hearing in Albany, New
2 York. National Grid. Just, this is what National
3 Grid said. Just to be clear, the reason we are using
4 a hundred-year global warming potential is that it is
5 consistent with the EPA. We do know what the 20-year
6 global warming potential is, but that is not what is
7 going into the reporting. Sane Energy. So all your
8 reporting is based on the hundred-year timeframe even
9 though state law requires you to use a 20-year
10 timeframe. I'm asking how you calculate your
11 emissions and how you look at emissions reductions,
12 and if you were matching what the state is requiring,
13 because there are very different calculations when
14 looking at methane over a 20-year timeframe than a
15 hundred-year timeframe. On February 13, 2020, Sane
16 Energy Project along with youth climate movement
17 members took these concerns to a meeting with Dan
18 Zarelli, New York City's chief climate policy
19 advisor, Mark Chambers, director of the Mayor's
20 Office of Sustainability, and Lincoln Wrestler,
21 deputy chief of the staff, deputy chief of staff to
22 Mayor Bill de Blasio at City Hall to discuss our
23 dismay with the City of New York's stance and
24 behavior in the Con Ed and National Grid rate cases.
25

1
2 We requested that Mayor de Blasio instruct the City
3 of New York as parties to the current National Grid
4 rate case to decline their support of further fracked
5 gas infrastructure projects, which include 185
6 million dollars for the North Brooklyn MRI fracked
7 gas pipeline expansion. National Grid is telling our
8 neighbors they are already approved to finish this
9 pipeline when that is simply a lie. 108.5 million
10 dollars for liquified natural gas expansion,
11 including expanded LNG storage and two additional LNG
12 vaporizers in the residential neighborhood of Green
13 Point, Brooklyn. They've also applied to the City of
14 New York for a variance to use LNG bomb trucks to
15 take the gas to points in Massachusetts and Long
16 Island. 74 million dollars for additional
17 transmission pipelines in Long Island. We also
18 requested of Mark, Dan, and Lincoln that the City of
19 New York stand up to the constant bullying, lies, and
20 manipulation by National Grid and publicly denounce
21 the North Brooklyn MRI pipeline and help halt the
22 next phase they are asking money for to complete. We
23 have followed up twice with them after this meeting
24 and have received no response. We don't know where
25 to turn now because the City of New York has not

1 fought for the well-being of New Yorkers in either
2 corporate utility rate case and we need your help.
3 We just saw, we just saw Con Edison receive a 3
4 billion dollar rate hike from our wallets for their
5 shareholders to build an astronomical amount of
6 fracked gas infrastructure in Queens, the Bronx,
7 Westchester, with possibilities open in Manhattan.
8 The City of New York, as parties to the rate case,
9 did nothing to halt this climate disaster. National
10 Grid's rate case, not yet decided, is New York City's
11 climate test. We urge you to call upon the mayor to
12 act now on his recently passed climate declaration
13 and pull New York City's support from National Grid's
14 request. We look forward to continuing working with
15 the New York City Council on helping to develop any
16 plans on halting climate disaster methane and
17 replacing it with clean heat solutions, available now
18 at NYSERDA if we stick together and get the funding
19 to make renewable heat now happen for every resident
20 of New York City. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

23 Um, Ms. Harrison, if someone from the mayor's office
24 can raise their hand? Great. So right behind you,
25 so, ah, I know you raised some questions about

1
2 follow-up with the mayor's office, so she's right
3 behind you, you can have a conversation with her.
4 Thank you all for your testimony today. I really
5 appreciate. Thank you.

6 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Oh, wait,
9 oh, Mr. Howard, right? My apologies. I thought we
10 had, had called you, ah, as the next panel. But,
11 yes, please. My apologies.

12 MICHAEL HOWARD: It's OK, Councilman. I
13 just want to say good afternoon. My name is Michael
14 Howard. I have a MID, mild intellectual disability.
15 Um, so I didn't wrote my speech, what I was gonna
16 say, but...

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I
18 understand.

19 MICHAEL HOWARD: ...I have an opinion
20 about, um, climate change. Um, I'm all for, I'm all
21 for, um, Green New Deal and, um, the reason I'm all
22 for Green New Deal so we could have, 'cause I'm, I'm
23 into transportation to make sure, um, we have more
24 electric buses instead of diesel buses, 'cause I
25 know, I understand diesel buses came from the fossil

1
2 fuel industries, so it's best for fossil fuel
3 industry need to be shut down completely. And, um,
4 and speaking of, um, from what she's saying about the
5 Rockaways, I live in that district with your
6 colleague, um, Donovan Richards.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Um-hmm.

8 MICHAEL HOWARD: And last night I was at
9 the, um, I was at the, um, the forum at the, um, Macy
10 Adona Church last night.

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah, um-
12 hmm.

13 MICHAEL HOWARD: Yeah, I was there,
14 hearing that, hearing that testimony. It was just,
15 it was just three, um, there was just only three,
16 Richards, Councilman Richards, um, former Councilman,
17 um, former Councilwoman Crowley, and Anthony Miranda,
18 a former cop.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yep, Um-hmm.

20 MICHAEL HOWARD: Yeah, I was there last
21 night. Listen, but, um, I didn't stay for, I mean, I
22 stayed for most of it but I left. I left a little
23 bit early 'cause I had wanted to get home, so I can
24 wake up early, you know. So, um, anyway, like I
25 said, I'm all for Green New Deal. Um, it's best for

1 the Rockaways to have, um, especially Jamaica Bay, to
2 have clean water, 'cause I notice the beach doesn't
3 have clean water. The water is dirty and I ain't, I
4 been living out there for almost seven years. I
5 mean, the last time I went to the beach out there
6 when I was little. Ever since then I stopped 'cause
7 I noticed the water is dirty. It needs to be
8 cleaned. That's why I say I'm all for Green New Deal
9 and, um, public housing for all in case people lose
10 their homes like if I ever get evicted for no reason
11 I just hope that I, um, I heard there was a hearing
12 yesterday which I was about to attend to, which is,
13 right to counsel, I was gonna be there. I was gonna
14 be one of the people to be there to testify, and I
15 just hope us, right to counsel people won, won the
16 case, whichever may be, and, um, and what else, um,
17 back to transportation. I would love to see most, I
18 would love to see most stations to be accessible, not
19 some, 'cause right now it seems like it's, it's about
20 25% to 35% accessible. I was telling, I had
21 testified in Transit headquarters to let them know it
22 should be 100% accessible.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You and I
25 are gonna have a lot of agreement today. Ah, I think

1 we see eye to eye on a lot of things. I'm in
2 agreement with on public transit. I agree with you
3 on right to counsel. I agree with you on the Green
4 New Deal and the need for us to protect communities
5 like the Rockaways.
6

7 MICHAEL HOWARD: Yes, yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: That, who
9 are, ah, are on the front lines of climate change and
10 even after Hurricane Sandy remain on the front line
11 of climate change.

12 MICHAEL HOWARD: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So I, I
14 wholeheartedly agree with you and I'm glad that you
15 are taking the activism that you are.

16 MICHAEL HOWARD: Yeah, I just want to
17 thank God that, um, I moved out there after Hurricane
18 Sandy.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I appreciate
20 you being here today. And thank you for your
21 testimony. It really means a lot to us to have you
22 here. Thank you so very much.

23 MICHAEL HOWARD: Any time, Councilman.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,
25 thank you all.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION 100
2 MICHAEL HOWARD: May I have some more
3 water please?

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: The last
5 panel, ah, Katherine McVey Hughes. Katherine, it's
6 always good to see you. Rhianna Mathurin, ah,
7 Barbara Hurdle, Johnson Henson, and Rachel Cole. OK,
8 so we have three of the five that I called. We do
9 have to vacate this room before 12:50 because they
10 have to prepare for a vote here at 1:00, but I think
11 we can do that, right?

12 KATHERINE MCVEIGH HUGHES: Great.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I have faith
14 in you guys.

15 KATHERINE MCVEIGH HUGHES: Yes, and I
16 also have to be somewhere, so, um, first of all, good
17 afternoon, Chair Constantinides and, um, council.
18 Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify
19 today. I'm addressing challenges in meeting our
20 carbon commitments. My name is Katherine McVey
21 Hughes. I served 20 years on Manhattan Community
22 Board 1 you're in, located right here now in
23 Community Board 1. Half of that time as chair or
24 vice chair. Today I'm representing the Financial
25 District Neighborhood Association, known as FDNA.

1 FindI is home to roughly 60,000 residents and is the
2 fourth largest business district in the country. In
3 September 2014 the New York City committed to reduce
4 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050,
5 known as 80 by 50, Local Law 66 of 2014, with an
6 interim target to reduce emissions 40% by 2030. The
7 graph attached, since you don't take PowerPoint
8 slides, you've seen this many times before in my, ah,
9 prior hearings, um, you'll see there's no data for
10 2018, as you had mentioned earlier.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah, we,
13 we've gone through that pretty extensively.

14 KATHERINE MCVEIGH HUGHES: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But this
16 year we're gonna have both, we're gonna have 18 and
17 19. That's the promise.

18 KATHERINE MCVEIGH HUGHES: OK.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: The mayor's
20 office is shaking her head yes with a thumbs up. So
21 there we go.

22 KATHERINE MCVEIGH HUGHES: So hopefully
23 we'll get 2018 before we get the 2019. Um, so as you
24 can see in the graph, since 2005, which is the
25 baseline situation, New York City has reduced

1 citywide annual greenhouse gas emissions by 17% in 12
2 years and it still hovers around the 2012 levels.

3 Most of the greenhouse gasses may be divided into a
4 third for transportation and two-thirds for
5 stationary energy or you heard earlier buildings.

6 Um, as I state here in the testimony is when will the
7 2018 citywide, ah, annual gas emissions by sector be
8 released and the 2019. Clearly there's much more to
9 do to reach the 2030 goal which requires another 23p
10 reduction this decade. And we've done the easy
11 stuff. Um, please act now and pass Intro, ah, 270, a

12 Local Law to amend the administrative code of the
13 City of New York in relationship to carbon accounting
14 and Intro 1720, a Local Law to amend the
15 administrative code of the New York City, of New

16 York, in relation to the establishment of a citywide
17 climate emissions plan. While we try to do our part
18 to reduce greenhouse gasses we also have to protect
19 our region against climate change-driven storms,
20 violent weather, and sea level rise. This past

21 Friday the public was notified that the New York-New
22 Jersey Hat study along with several other nationwide
23 US Army Corps coastal storm resiliency measures
24 feasibility studies did not receive federal
25

1
2 appropriation funding as announced in the US Army
3 Corps physical year 2020 work plan. The study's
4 tentatively selected plan known as TSP, [inaudible]
5 and release of the draft [inaudible] feasibility
6 report in Tier 1 environmental impact statement, EIS,
7 originally scheduled for release late this summer
8 2020 has also been indefinitely postponed. Activity
9 related to the New York-New Jersey Hat study are
10 suspended until further notice. What's the
11 alternative? On January 18, 2020, President Trump
12 tweeted, "That you will just have to get your map,
13 mops and buckets ready." I think we all agree that
14 doesn't work for, that didn't work for Superstorm
15 Sandy nor will it work for the next weather crisis.
16 This study included an area of 2150 plus square miles
17 and 900 plus miles of affected shoreline with an
18 affected population of 16 million people in both New
19 York and New Jersey. Consequently, there's no
20 comprehensive regional study being planned, which
21 would have included New York City's 520 miles of
22 waterfront and only recently has the seaport and
23 financial district resiliency planning process has
24 been restarted and for the record, which you already
25 know, no funding has been implemented. I would also

1 like to mention, um, a colleague from Community Board
2 1, who wanted to make sure that, um, that there is no
3 plan north of Chamber Street with the elimination of
4 the US Army Corps because that was part of the plan.
5 Um, also please find attached I have a graph here
6 which shows we're at 1 degree centigrade already. In
7 addition, two other graph, ah, maps here from Climate
8 Central Surging Seas Mapping that shows what happens
9 to the New York City region at 1.5 degrees
10 centigrade, and again what happens at 4 degrees
11 centigrade. In addition, I have attached the
12 official sea level rise projections for New York City
13 by the Sabine Center for Climate Change Law at
14 Columbia School. So last March, um, 2019, um the New
15 York City, ah, Panel on Climate Change, known as
16 NPCC, um, was asked to also release estimates of low
17 probability but high impact and so the number for
18 2100 is now 9.5 feet which is off of the chart.
19 That's only 80 years away. So, um, counting the
20 greenhouse gas emissions is really important and I
21 really want to thank you for making sure that not
22 only do we count them, count it, but that we do
23 something immediately. Thank you very much.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,
3 Katherine, and I share your concern on the federal
4 level. I found this president's comments to be
5 disgusting and ill-informed, but that's most of the
6 things that he says. Ah, so it's sometimes hard to
7 distinguish between. Ah, but he is an individual who
8 has no scientific understanding whatsoever of what's
9 going on and lacks the compassion. We, we lost lives
10 here during Hurricane Sandy and to make light of the
11 devastation that we suffered, that we get out mops
12 and buckets is almost, it's a joke. Ah, it wasn't a
13 joke for the families who lost their lives. It
14 wasn't a joke for the families that lost their homes.
15 It wasn't a joke for the families who are still
16 dealing with the trauma of all of that and are, who
17 are now diligently and bravely working so hard to
18 combat the next storm. Ah, so, I mean, I think
19 that's why I've introduced legislation to have a
20 five-borough resiliency plan, I think that's why
21 we're working closely with the Mayor's Office of
22 Resiliency on these issues and we'll continue to do
23 so because we, we can't leave it up to, you know,
24 snide jokes or individuals who are, are, you know,
25 who, selling, you know, the United States away to the

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2 fossil fuel industry and leaving us behind. Um, we
3 have to continue to work harder, ah, and, and lack of
4 their leadership we're showing real leadership here
5 in New York City. So, um, you and I will keep
6 working together and we'll keep working with the
7 administration. I think we're gonna be able to
8 accomplish things and, and we're showing that there's
9 a path forward here. So, um, I know the, the federal
10 government is lacking leadership but hopefully that
11 will change in 12, 10 months. There's a lot of work
12 to do between now and then, but we can't get
13 political on a governmental thing, but I'll say in 10
14 months hopefully we'll, we'll have an opportunity to
15 change that narrative and have someone there that
16 maybe understands science a little bit more.

17 KATHERINE MCVEIGH HUGHES: OK, thank you
18 very much. I'm sorry, unfortunately, I have a
19 meeting, too.

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yep. No, I
21 understand. Have a good day.

22 BARBARA HURDLE: Hi, my name is Barbara
23 Hurdle. Um, I'm involved in lots of different
24 groups. Um, but thank you for having this hearing.
25 I really appreciate that you're giving a voice to

1
2 people. So I appreciate the effort to measure the
3 carbon greenhouse emissions and I was thinking that
4 maybe NYCHA could go into thermal, um, thermal power
5 'cause they have a lot of land around, maybe, they'd
6 probably like an opportunity to do something here.
7 Maybe we could make a deal, anyhow. So I hope that
8 you'll measure what is coming on line also. For
9 instance, the North Brooklyn Metropolitan Natural Gas
10 Pipeline. It should really not come through, um, due
11 to its potential for the release of carbon and
12 greenhouse gasses. So I hope that measure what could
13 be coming through and, um, and I support these bills.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,
16 Barbara. Thank you. Make sure you hit the red
17 button. Either you, you get to pick.

18 RHIANNA: Hi, my name is Rhianna. I work
19 with the Earth Day Initiative. Um, I want to use
20 this opportunity to raise awareness about our Earth
21 Week events. Um, we're working in collaboration with
22 a lot of different organizations. Um, we are
23 actually hosting in partnership with the City of New
24 York and March for Science a kick-off event on April
25 19 in celebration of Earth Day and it will also begin

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2 a week of strikes and youth mobilization for climate
3 action.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You can,
5 please make sure to get me that information? I'd
6 love to, ah, see if we can promote it and amplify it.

7 RHIANNA: [inaudible]

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
9 very much, Rhianna. I appreciate your testimony. I
10 appreciate everyone's testimony today. I thank you
11 all for being here to talk about, ah, these two bills
12 and oversight around our climate emission and how we,
13 we are budgeting them over time. Ah, so I look
14 forward to working with the administration. I think
15 we do have lots of points of agreement here. And I
16 think we can get these bills passed. I want to again
17 thank, ah, Samara Swanston, our staff attorney, who
18 always does a great job, Jonathan Seltzer, our
19 finance analyst, Patrick, who I know is filling in
20 for Nadia Johnson and Ricky Charla. Thank you, and
21 then my own staff, Nicholas Wizowski, my attorney. I
22 want to thank the Sergeant at Arms, ah, for always
23 doing an amazing job, uh, and, and every single time
24 that we're here. So with that I will gavel this
25

committee of the Environmental Protection Committee
closed. Thank you. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date March 15, 2020