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**Testimony of Marla G. Simpson, City Chief Procurement Officer and Director,
Mayor's Office of Contract Services, Before City Council Finance Committee:
Intro. 729-A, Requiring Posting of Contract Terms on Public Online Database**

January 23, 2012

Good morning Chairman Recchia and members of the Committee. I am Marla G. Simpson, Director of the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS). On behalf of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on the important topic of contract transparency. The Administration supports Intro. 729-A. We thank Speaker Christine Quinn and the Council staff for working with us on this bill, as we strive together to make New York City the most accountable, accessible and responsive city government in the country.

In Fiscal 2011, New York City procured almost \$15 billion worth of supplies, services and construction work, through more than 55,000 contracts and related agreements. Procurement is an essential tool helping us serve the public and accomplish critical governmental functions. Agencies procure a wide array of goods and services, from trucks that sweep (and salt) the streets, to architectural designs for new firehouses, from biodiesel fuel for City vehicles, to nonprofit service providers working in communities throughout the City.

New York City remains one of the largest contracting jurisdictions in the nation, and through procurement, we've invested in core services, infrastructure, waste management, economic development and programs to serve New Yorkers in need. Under the Mayor's leadership, we've also improved our procurement process to make it more efficient and accountable. Intro. 729-A takes us another step in that direction.

The Financial Management System (FMS) is the City's financial and accounting database. All City agencies use FMS to record every financial transaction in City government, including budget, payroll, capital assets, contract registration, invoicing and payment. Given the scale of New York City's financial operations, FMS is a



very complex system. Our challenge, as we implement Intro. 729-A, will be to make information about the City's contracts, most of which is already contained in FMS, both transparent and understandable to the public.

This legislation expands upon efforts throughout City government to expand public access to key financial information. The Council has posted its discretionary award database on the web, listing all the nonprofits funded in the budget process, as well as those that have requested funds. My office now posts detailed annual plans and data compilations on our website – ranging from our Annual Procurement Indicator reports (with downloadable data appendices), to annual citywide plans for human services programs, construction projects and concessions. We also post and maintain the publicly searchable Doing Business Database, established under Local Law 34 of 2007, which addressed so-called “pay-to-play” issues. And the Comptroller, as the City's chief fiscal officer, has also posted two very useful publicly searchable database applications: Clearview, which tracks City agency contract registrations, and Checkbook, which tracks the City's payments to vendors and other outside entities.

With Intro. 729-A, we can take this effort to the next level. MOCS has been working with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) on a new application, building upon our Doing Business Database. This new application, which will be web-posted and fully searchable, already includes most of the information described in Intro. 729-A, and we are committed to ensuring that it provides the full range of data described in the bill as soon as possible. As part of that effort, we will undertake a citywide training program to ensure that the descriptive information that we draw from FMS is complete, accurate and understandable. We look forward to completing this application development work soon.

An efficient, fair and transparent procurement system is vital to City government. Especially in these challenging economic times, we must achieve the best value for the taxpayers' dollar, meaning that we must obtain high quality goods and services, delivered to us on a timely basis and at good prices, from responsible business partners that we select through a process that ensures fairness to all. The transparency database made established under Intro. 729-A will empower all New Yorkers and will help us attain these important goals.

I am available to answer any questions the Committee may have at this time.

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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