

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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March 25, 2019
Start: 10:14 a.m.
Recess: 10:53 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
16th Fl.

B E F O R E: ROBERT E. CORNEGY, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Fernando Cabrera
Margaret S. Chin
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Mark Gjonaj
Barry S. Grodenchik
Bill Perkins
Carlina Rivera
Helen K. Rosenthal
Ritchie J. Torres

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

2 [sound check] [background comments/pause]
3 [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Good morning,
5 everyone. Thank you for coming. I'm Council Member
6 Robert Cornegy, Chair of the Council's Committee on
7 Housing and Buildings. We're here to hold a vote on
8 two bills related to protecting the city against
9 another Legionnaires' Disease outbreak. In 2015, the
10 city faced the largest Legionnaires Disease outbreak
11 in its history. As a result of the outbreak, 124
12 people contracted Legionnaires' Disease, and 12
13 people actually died. Legionnaires' Disease, which
14 is a severe form of pneumonia is spread through mist.
15 The 2015 outbreak was tied to cooling towers, which
16 are part of a building's air conditioning system.
17 Cooling towers near the outbreak site were inspected
18 and nearly half tested positive-positive for
19 Legionella, the bacteria that causes Legionnaires'
20 Disease. Following this Legionnaires' Disease
21 outbreak, the City Council enacted Local Law 77 of
22 2015, which mandates the registration and inspection
23 of cooling towers. Two bills we are voting on today
24 help to ensure compliance with Local Law 77 to
25 prevent further outbreaks of Legionnaires' Disease.

2 Proposed Intro No. 1149-B will require that the
3 individuals who conduct cooling tower inspections
4 report the date certain cooling tower inspections
5 were conducted to the Department of Health and Mental
6 Health, DOHMH. This will ensure that these vital
7 inspections are regularly conducted. This bill would
8 also give the public the right to review results of
9 all cooling tower inspections. Finally, this bill
10 will require DOHMH to send owners and operators of
11 cooling towers an electric reminder before they are
12 required to submit annual certifications for their
13 cooling towers. This reminder would also include a
14 link to the site where the certifications can be
15 submitted. Intro No. 1158 would expand cooling tower
16 owner education by requiring DOHMH in consultation
17 with the Department of Buildings to hold bi-annual
18 information sections for building owners regarding
19 the maintenance, cleaning and inspection of cooling
20 towers. This bill would also require DOHMH and DOB
21 post the information online. I believe that we have
22 an opening statement by Council Member Ben Kallos.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you, Chair
24 Cornegy and Speaker Johnson. I'm Council Member Ben
25 Kallos. You can Tweet Grand Facebooking (sic) at Ben

2 Kallos. I want to thank the Committee staff on this,
3 particularly the Council for tough negotiations, and
4 Council Member Yeger for being a pre-introduction co-
5 sponsor. New Yorkers can breathe easier as warm
6 weather and cooling season approaches as cooling
7 towers that are a breeding ground for Legionnaires'
8 will finally have to report compliance with 90-day
9 inspections meant to thwart the spread of the deadly
10 disease. According to WNYC, in June 2018, more than
11 1,000 cooling towers representing 20% were out of
12 compliance with 90-day inspections that must be
13 conducted while operating. Introduction 1149-B would
14 require the New York City Department of Health and
15 Mental Hygiene to send owners and operators of
16 cooling towers an electronic reminder 30 days prior
17 to filing deadlines for annual certifications with a
18 link to where these certifications can be submitted.
19 The bill would also require cooling towers inspectors
20 to report to DOH-DOHMH when the 90-day inspections
21 occur. DOHMH must make this date available on the
22 city website in an open data. Finally, this bill
23 would require building owners to make cooling tower
24 inspections results available for public examination.
25 When it's you, your aging parent or child on the

2 line, you want to know that every cooling tower is
3 being inspected to catch Legionnaires' before it can
4 spread and kill anyone. I hope that reminding
5 building owners coupled with this immediate
6 enforcement for failing to inspect every 90 days can
7 prevent anyone else from getting Legionnaires'
8 Disease. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. We've
10 been joined also by Council Members Grodenchik,
11 Kallos, Rivera, Chink and Perkins, and Rosenthal. I
12 believe that we can vote now. Billy Martin, would
13 you call the roll, please.

14 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk
15 roll call vote Committee on Housing and Buildings.
16 Both items are coupled. Chair Cornegy.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I vote aye.

18 CLERK: Chin.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye.

20 CLERK: Rosenthal.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Aye.

22 CLERK: Grodenchik.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

24 CLERK: Perkins.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Aye.

1 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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2 CLERK: Rivera.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Aye.

4 CLERK: By a vote of 6 in the
5 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions
6 both items have been adopted by the committee.

7 [pause] [background comments]

8 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: The roll is being
9 held open for ten minutes. [pause]

10 CLERK: Continuation roll call the
11 Committee on Housing and Buildings, Introduction
12 1149-B and 1150-A, Council Member Gjonaj.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Aye on all.

14 CLERK: The final vote on these items now
15 stands at 7 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and
16 no abstentions, Council Member Gjonaj. [pause]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date April 26, 2019