



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS  
MELANIE E. LA ROCCA, COMMISSIONER  
AUGUST 14, 2020**

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Good morning Chair Constantinides and members of the Committee on Environmental Protection. I am Melanie E. La Rocca, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Buildings (“the Department”). I am joined today by Gina Bocra, Chief Sustainability Officer at the Department. We are pleased to be here to offer testimony on Intro. 1946, regarding outreach to building owners around making their buildings more sustainable.

Engaging those who do business with us is critical to the work we do at the Department – this includes building owners, contractors, design professionals, and construction workers. Education is a key component of this engagement. Educating the public can help us keep our construction sites and buildings safe, and now, through our implementation of the Climate Mobilization Act, make our buildings more sustainable. The Department is committed to increasing the sustainability of buildings. This goal can only be accomplished if building owners do their part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions coming from their buildings, which are the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in New York City.

The Department has already taken steps to educate owners of their obligations under Local Law 97 of 2019 (“Local Law 97”), which regulates greenhouse gas emissions from buildings exceeding 25,000 gross square feet, and will continue to work to educate owners leading up to 2024, the date by which they must first meet emissions limits established in the law, and beyond. To date, the Department has updated its website to provide information to owners about the requirements of Local Law 97 and established a dedicated email address to field inquiries from owners. We are using the inquiries we receive to develop additional resources we can use to

educate owners. We are also informing new building applicants of their obligations under this law when they submit plans to the Department so that they can start planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the very beginning of their construction projects. This fall, we will be conducting outreach directly to owners of the worst performing buildings so that they know where they stand early on. We will then focus on conducting outreach to all owners of buildings subject to Local Law 97.

Intro. 1946 requires that owners receive information regarding making their buildings more sustainable at the conclusion of an inspection of their gas piping systems. This is not the best time to share information with owners about making their buildings more sustainable or about Local Law 97 as these are inspections of gas piping systems that occur every four years, which are not conducted by the Department. Additionally, the universe of buildings subject to these inspections of gas piping systems is much broader than the universe of buildings subject to Local Law 97.

The Department supports the intent of this bill and would like to work with this Committee to identify better opportunities to connect with owners about making their buildings more sustainable. For example, the Department plans to conduct direct outreach to owners of buildings subject to Local Law 97 by sending them letters, emails, or by leveraging existing resources to connect with them, like including information on their property tax bills.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We welcome any questions you may have.