



Testimony

of

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New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

before the

New York City Council Committee on Consumer Affairs and Business Licensing

on

Intro 970

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City Hall – Council Chambers
New York, NY

Good morning Chairperson Espinal and members of the Committee on Consumer Affairs and Business Licensing. I am Corinne Schiff, Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Health at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. I am joined by my colleagues from the New York Police Department. On behalf of Commissioner Bassett, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Introduction 970, which relates to the use of under-fire char-broilers on mobile food vending units.

The Department is charged with permitting mobile food vending carts and trucks, and with licensing vendors who work on the permitted units. We conduct pre-permit inspections to check that the unit's equipment and facilities meet the requirements of the Health Code, and we conduct unannounced inspections to evaluate food safety practices while the carts and trucks are operating. The top priority for our inspectors is to prevent foodborne illness and promote safe food operations.

Introduction 970 would prohibit under-fired char-broilers on food carts and trucks. Under-fired char-broilers are slatted grills that have a heat source underneath. When meats, poultry or seafood are grilled on a char-broiler, fats and oils drip directly onto the heat source, and this produces a type of atmospheric fine particulate matter, known as PM2.5, which is a contributor to air pollution. Exposure to PM2.5 can contribute to, or worsen, serious health problems, including heart and lung diseases.

The Department supports limiting under-fired char-broilers as part of the City's efforts to reduce sources of air pollution, and to protect vendors who may be routinely exposed to PM2.5 when using this equipment. The Department will be able to integrate a compliance check for this requirement during new permit and permit renewal inspections. The Department looks forward to discussing this bill further with Council to ensure that the appropriate units are covered. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to take questions.